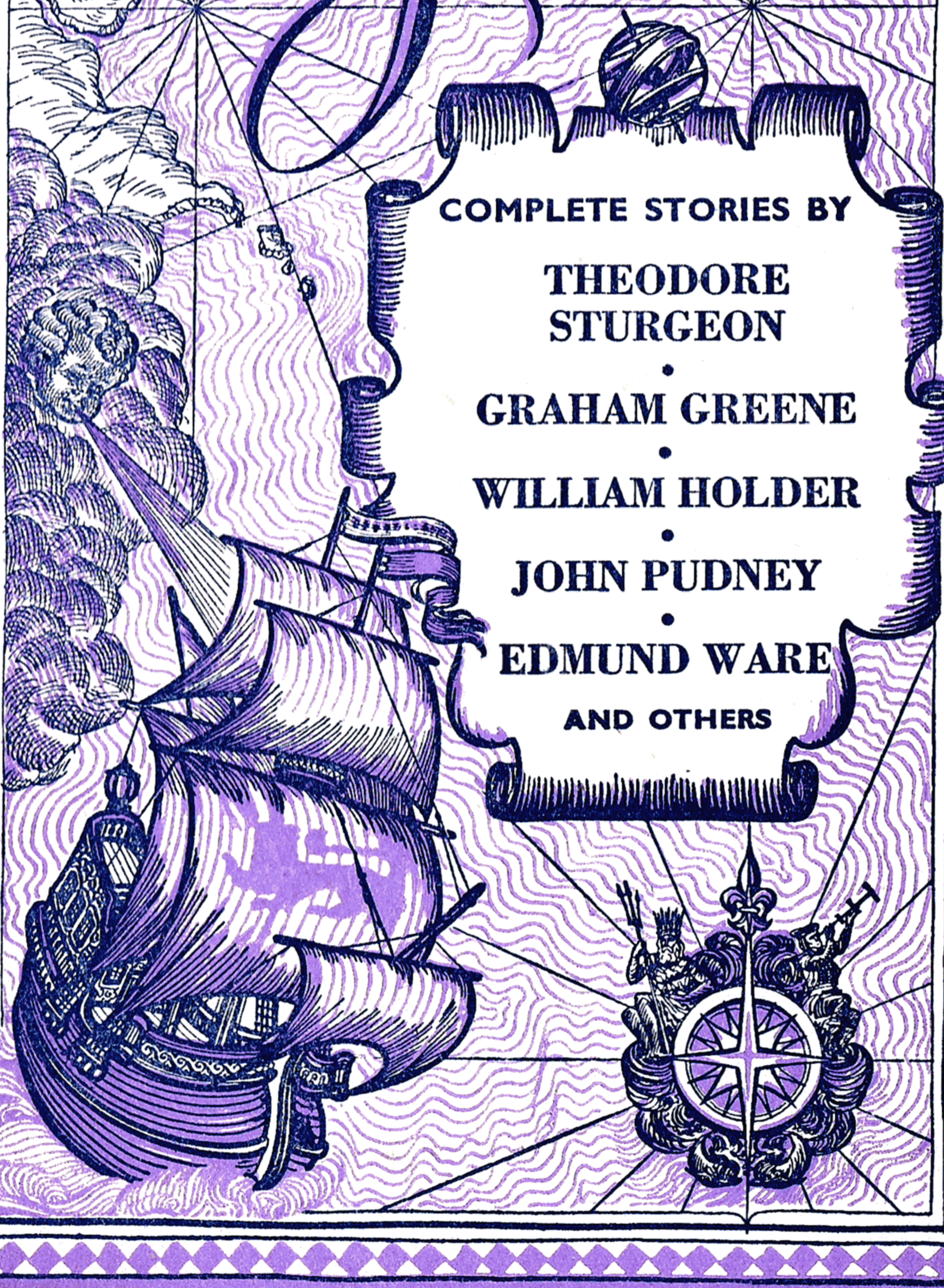
ARGOSY

MAY 1947 ONE SHILLING AND THREEPENCE



COMPLETE STORIES BY

THEODORE STURGEON

•

GRAHAM GREENE

•

WILLIAM HOLDER

•

JOHN PUDNEY

•

EDMUND WARE

AND OTHERS

When you need an Aspirin take an Alasil

The New & Improved Form of Aspirin

You will be amazed by the Effectiveness of this Advanced Form of Pain Relief

ALWAYS keep a supply of 'Alasil' tablets handy. You will have good cause to appreciate their remarkable effectiveness in the relief of pain.

'Alasil' tablets are the modern improved form of aspirin, produced by the 'Ovaltine' Research Laboratories. One reason for their exceptional efficiency is that they combine the highest quality aspirin with 'Alocol'—well-known to doctors for its soothing and protective influence on the stomach. As a result of this scientific development 'Alasil' is made generally acceptable, even to those with sensitive digestions.

'Alasil' tablets have the advantage of breaking up at once on the tongue, or in a little water. Thus they are easily swallowed and quick in action. They represent an important advance in the relief of pain, and are widely prescribed by Doctors, Dental Surgeons and Specialists.

Why not benefit from this scientific progress? Next time you need an aspirin take an 'Alasil,' and note the difference. Take 'Alasil' for: HEADACHE, TOOTHACHE, COLDS & CHILLS, RHEUMATIC PAIN, SLEEPLESSNESS, and PERIODIC PAINS.

Prescribed by Doctors Everywhere

In Bottles,
1/5, 1/11½ *and* **2/10**
Including Purchase Tax
At all Chemists

AS86

ARGOSY

Contents for May, 1947

Vol. VIII **No. 5**

		Page
If I Were King	**W. E. Henley**	**2**
Bianca's Hands	**Theodore Sturgeon**	**3**
Second Death	**Graham Greene**	**11**
Loadstone	**Gerald Gould**	**15**
None But the Brave		**16**

The extract from "I Give You My Word" is printed by permission of Jonathan Cape
"The Green Eye and the Little Feathered God" is printed by permission of John Murray

Bad Luck McCall	**William Holder**	**19**
Owl Song		**32**
Revenge	**Samuel Blas**	**33**
Belvedere	**John Masefield**	**38**

By permission of Dr. John Masefield, O.M. and the Society of Authors

The Caddy Said "Moo"	**Aleko Lilius**	**39**
Here We Go Quietly Nuts in May	**Ogden Nash**	**41**
Major Pleasures		**42**

The poem by Robert Bridges from his "Shorter Poems" by permission of the Clarendon Press

Edna's Fruit Hat	**John Pudney**	**45**
The Outlaw of Cedar Forest	**Edmund Ware**	**57**
Tale of a Queue	**Norman Edwards**	**71**
Other Worlds Than This		**78**

"The Witch's Fate" is printed by permission of the Cambridge University Press
"Cave" is printed by permission of J. M. Dent

Petite Cousine	**Herman Teirlinck**	**81**

From "Harvest of the Lowlands"

Argosy Crossword	**96**

Printed in England by KEMSLEY NEWSPAPERS LTD., MANCHESTER, and published on the 10th of each month by THE AMALGAMATED PRESS LTD., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for Transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription Rates: Inland 17/6, Abroad 17/-, and Canada 16/6 per annum. ADVERTISEMENT OFFICES: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Sole Agents for Australasia, MESSRS. GORDON & GOTCH, LTD.; for South Africa, CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY LTD.

ARGOSY is sold subject to the following conditions, namely, that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price of 1s. 3d.; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorized cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

If I Were King

IF I were King, my pipe should be premier.
The skies of time and chance are seldom clear ;
We would inform them all with azure weather.
Delight alone would need to shed a tear,
For dream and deed should war no more together.
Art should aspire, yet ugliness be dear ;
Beauty, the shaft, should speed with wit for feather ;
And love, sweet love, should never fall to sere,
If I were King.

But politics should find no harbour near ;
The Philistine should dread to slip his tether ;
Tobacco should be duty free, and beer ;
In fact, in room of this, the age of leather,
An age of gold all radiant should appear,
If I were King.

W. E. HENLEY

★*It is with pride that Argosy presents the prize-winning story in our £250 competition. Its strange imaginative quality and the brilliance of its technique convince us of the author's sure mastery of the art of short story writing. The sinister and beautiful hands of Bianca will linger long in the memory of all who read this story. We congratulate the winner, Theodore Sturgeon, on a powerful and moving piece of work.*

BIANCA'S HANDS

by THEODORE STURGEON

BIANCA'S mother was leading her when Ran saw her first. Bianca was squat and small, with dank hair and rotten teeth. Her mouth was crooked and it drooled. Either she was blind or she just didn't care about bumping into things. It didn't really matter because Bianca was an imbecile. Her hands . . .

They were lovely hands, graceful hands, hands as soft and smooth and white as snowflakes, hands whose colour was lightly tinged with pink like the glow of Mars on snow. They lay on the counter side by side, looking at Ran. They lay there half closed and crouching, each pulsing with a movement like the panting of a field creature, and they looked. Not watched. Later, they watched him. Now they looked. They did, because Ran felt their united gaze, and his heart beat strongly.

Bianca's mother demanded cheese stridently. Ran brought it to her in his own time while she berated him. She was a bitter woman, as any woman has a right to be who is wife of no man and mother to a monster. Ran gave her the cheese and took her money and never noticed that it was not enough, because of Bianca's hands. When Bianca's mother tried to take one of the hands, it scuttled away from the unwanted touch. It did not lift from the counter, but ran on its fingertips to the edge and leaped into a fold of Bianca's dress. The woman took the unresisting elbow and led Bianca out.

Ran stayed there at the counter unmoving, thinking of Bianca's hands. Ran was strong and bronze and not very clever. He had

never been taught about beauty and strangeness, but he did not need that teaching. His shoulders were wide and his arms were heavy and thick, but he had great soft eyes and thick lashes. They curtained his eyes now. He was seeing Bianca's hands again dreamily. He found it hard to breathe . . .

Harding came back. Harding owned the store. He was a large man whose features barely kept his cheeks apart. He said, "Sweep up, Ran. We're closing early today." Then he went behind the counter, squeezing past Ran.

Ran got the broom and swept slowly.

"A woman bought cheese," he said suddenly. "A poor woman, with very old clothes. She was leading a girl. I can't remember what the girl looked like, except—— Who was she?"

"I saw them go out," said Harding. "The woman is Bianca's mother, and the girl is Bianca. I don't know their other name. They don't talk to people much. I wish they wouldn't come in here. Hurry up, Ran."

Ran did what was necessary and put away his broom. Before he left he asked, "Where do they live, Bianca and her mother?"

"On the other side. A house on no road, away from people. Good night, Ran."

Ran went from the shop directly over to the other side, not waiting for his supper. He found the house easily, for it was indeed away from the road, and stood rudely by itself. The townspeople had cauterized the house by wrapping it in empty fields.

Harshly, "What do you want?" Bianca's mother asked as she opened the door.

"May I come in?"

"What do you want?"

"May I come in?" he asked again. She made as if to slam the door, and then stood aside. "Come."

Ran went in and stood still. Bianca's mother crossed the room and sat under an old lamp, in the shadow. Ran sat opposite her, on a three-legged stool. Bianca was not in the room.

The woman tried to speak, but embarrassment clutched at her voice. She withdrew into her bitterness, saying nothing. She kept peeping at Ran, who sat quietly with his arms folded and the uncertain light in his eyes. He knew she would speak soon, and he could wait.

"Ah, well . . ." She was silent after that, for a time, but now she had forgiven him his intrusion. Then, "It's a great while since anyone came to see me; a great while . . . it was different before. I was a pretty girl——"

She bit her words off and her face popped out of the shadows,

shrivelled and sagging as she leaned forward. Ran saw that she was beaten and cowed and did not want to be laughed at.

"Yes," he said gently. She sighed and leaned back so that her face disappeared again. She said nothing for a moment, sitting looking at Ran, liking him.

"We were happy, the two of us," she mused, "until Bianca came. He didn't like her, poor thing, he didn't, no more than I do now. He went away. I stayed by her because I was her mother. I'd go away myself, I would, but people know me, and I haven't a penny——not a penny . . . They'd bring me back to her, they would, to care for her. It doesn't matter much now, though, because people don't want me any more than they want her, they don't . . ."

Ran shifted his feet uneasily, because the woman was crying. "Have you room for me here?" he asked.

Her head crept out into the light. Ran said swiftly, "I'll give you money each week, and I'll bring my own bed and things." He was afraid she would refuse.

She merged with the shadows again. "If you like," she said, trembling at her good fortune. "Though why you'd want to . . . still, I guess if I had a little something to cook up nice, and a good reason for it, I could make someone real cosy here. But——*why*?" She rose. Ran crossed the room and pushed her back into the chair. He stood over her, tall.

"I never want you to ask me that," he said, speaking very slowly. "Hear?"

She swallowed and nodded. "I'll come back tomorrow with the bed and things," he said.

He left her there under the lamp, blinking out of the dimness, folded round and about with her misery and her wonder.

People talked about it. People said, "Ran has moved to the house of Bianca's mother." "It must be because——" "Ah," said some, "Ran was always a strange boy. It must be because——" "Oh, *no*!" cried others, appalled. "Ran is such a good boy. He wouldn't——"

Harding was told. He frightened the busy little woman who told him. He said, "Ran is very quiet, but he is honest and he does his work. As long as he comes here in the morning and earns his wage, he can do what he wants, where he wants, and it is not my business to stop him." He said this so very sharply that the little woman dared not say anything more.

Ran was very happy, living there. Saying little, he began to learn about Bianca's hands.

He watched Bianca being fed. Her hands would not feed her, the lovely aristocrats. Beautiful parasites they were, taking their animal life from the heavy squat body that carried them, and giving

nothing in return. They would lie one on each side of her plate, pulsing, while Bianca's mother put food into the disinterested drooling mouth. They were shy, those hands, of Ran's bewitched gaze. Caught out there naked in the light and open of the table-top, they would creep to the edge and drop out of sight—all but four rosy fingertips clutching the cloth.

They never lifted from a surface. When Bianca walked, her hands did not swing free, but twisted in the fabric of her dress. And when she approached a table or the mantelpiece and stood, her hands would run lightly up and leap, landing together, resting silently, watchfully, with that pulsing peculiar to them.

They cared for each other. They would not touch Bianca herself, but each hand groomed the other. It was the only labour to which they would bend themselves.

Three evenings after he came, Ran tried to take one of the hands in his. Bianca was alone in the room, and Ran went to her and sat beside her. She did not move, nor did her hands. They rested on a small table before her, preening themselves. This, then, was when they really began watching him. He felt it, right down to the depths of his enchanted heart. The hands kept stroking each other, and yet they knew he was there, they knew of his desire. They stretched themselves before him, archly, languorously, and his blood pounded hot. Before he could stay himself he reached and tried to grasp them. He was strong, and his move was sudden and clumsy. One of the hands seemed to disappear, so swiftly did it drop into Bianca's lap. But the other——

Ran's thick fingers closed on it and held it captive. It writhed, all but tore itself free. It took no power from the arm on which it lived, for Bianca's arms were flabby and weak. Its strength, like its beauty, was intrinsic, and it was only by shifting his grip to the puffy forearm that Ran succeeded in capturing it. So intent was he on touching it, holding it, that he did not see the other hand leap from the idiot girl's lap, land crouching at the table's edge. It reared back, fingers curling spiderlike, and sprang at him, fastening on his wrist. It clamped down agonizingly, and Ran felt bones give and crackle. With a cry he released the girl's arm. Her hands fell together and ran over each other, feeling for any small scratch, any tiny damage he might have done them in his passion. And as he sat there clutching his wrist, he saw the hands run to the far side of the little table, hook themselves over the edge and, contracting, draw her out of her place. She had no volition of her own—ah, but her hands had! Creeping over the walls, catching obscure and precarious holds in the wainscoting, they dragged the girl from the room.

And Ran sat there and sobbed, not so much from the pain in

his swelling arm, but in shame for what he had done. They might have been won to him in another, gentler way . . .

His head was bowed, yet suddenly he felt the gaze of those hands. He looked up swiftly enough to see one of them whisk round the doorpost. It had come back, then, to see . . . Ran rose heavily and took himself and his shame away. Yet he was compelled to stop in the doorway, even as had Bianca's hands. He watched covertly and saw them come into the room dragging the unprotesting idiot girl. They brought her to the long bench where Ran had sat with her. They pushed her on to it, flung themselves to the table, and began rolling and flattening themselves most curiously about. Ran suddenly realized that there was something of his there, and he was comforted, a little. They were rejoicing, drinking thirstily, revelling in his tears.

Afterwards, for nineteen days, the hands made Ran do penance. He knew them as inviolate and unforgiving; they would not show themselves to him, remaining always hidden in Bianca's dress or under the supper table. For those nineteen days Ran's passion and desire grew. More—his love became true love, for only true love knows reverence . . . and the possession of the hands became his reason for living, his goal in the life which that reason had given him.

Ultimately they forgave him. They kissed him coyly when he was not looking, touched him on the wrist, caught and held him for one sweet moment. It was at table . . . a great power surged through him, and he gazed down at the hands, now returned to Bianca's lap. A strong muscle in his jaw twitched and twitched, swelled and fell. Happiness like a golden light flooded him; passion spurred him, love imprisoned him, reverence was the gold of the golden light. The room wheeled and whirled about him and forces unimaginable flickered through him. Battling with himself yet lax in the glory of it, Ran sat unmoving, beyond the world, enslaved and yet possessor of all. Bianca's hands flushed pink, and if ever hands smiled to each other, then they did.

He rose abruptly, flinging his chair from him, feeling the strength of his back and shoulders. Bianca's mother, by now beyond surprise, looked at him and away. There was that in his eyes which she did not like, for to fathom it would disturb her, and she wanted no trouble. Ran strode from the room and outdoors, to be by himself that he might learn more of this new thing that had possessed him.

It was evening. The crooked-bending skyline drank the buoyancy of the sun, dragged it down, sucking greedily. Ran stood on a knoll, his nostrils flaring, feeling the depth of his lungs. He sucked in the crisp air and it smelled new to him, as though the sunset shades were truly in it. He knotted the muscles of his thighs and stared at

his smooth, solid fists. He raised his hands high over his head and stretching, sent out such a great shout that the sun sank. He watched it, knowing how great and tall he was, how strong he was, knowing the meaning of longing and belonging. And then he lay down on the clean earth and he wept.

When the sky grew cold enough for the moon to follow the sun beyond the hills, and still an hour after that, Ran returned to the house. He struck a light in the room of Bianca's mother, where she slept on a pile of old clothes. Ran sat beside her and let the light wake her. She rolled over to him and moaned, opened her eyes and shrank from him. "Ran . . . what do you want?"

"Bianca. I want to marry Bianca."

Her breath hissed between her gums. "No!" It was not a refusal, but astonishment. Ran touched her arm impatiently. Then she laughed.

"To—marry—Bianca. It's late, boy. Go back to bed, and in the morning you'll have forgotten this thing, this dream."

"I've not been to bed," he said patiently, but growing angry. "Will you give me Bianca, or not?"

She sat up and rested her chin on her withered knees. "You're right to ask me, for I'm her mother. Still and all—Ran, you've been good to us, Bianca and me. You're—you are a good boy but—Forgive me, lad, but you're something of a fool. Bianca's a monster. I say it though I am what I am to her. Do what you like, and never a word will I say. You should have known. I'm—sorry you asked me, for you have given me the memory of speaking so to you. I don't understand you; but do what you like, boy."

It was to have been a glance, but it became a stare as she saw his face. He put his hands carefully behind his back, and she knew he would have killed her else.

"I'll—marry her, then?" he whispered.

She nodded, terrified. "As you like, boy."

He blew out the light and left her.

Ran worked hard and saved his wages, and made one room beautiful for Bianca and himself. He built a soft chair, and a table that was like an altar for Bianca's sacred hands. There was a great bed, and heavy cloth to hide and soften the walls, and a rug.

They were married, though marrying took time. Ran had to go far afield before he could find one who would do what was necessary. The man came far and went again afterwards, so that none knew of it, and Ran and his wife were left alone. The mother spoke for Bianca, and Bianca's hand trembled frighteningly at the touch of the ring, writhed and struggled and then lay passive, blushing and

beautiful. But it was done. Bianca's mother did not protest, for she didn't dare. Ran was happy, and Bianca—well, nobody cared about Bianca.

After they were married Bianca followed Ran and his two brides into the beautiful room. He washed Bianca and used rich lotions. He washed and combed her hair, and brushed it many times until it shone, to make her more fit to be with the hands he had married. He never touched the hands, though he gave them soaps and creams and tools with which they could groom themselves. They were pleased. Once one of them ran up his coat and touched his cheek and made him exultant.

He left then and returned to the shop with his heart full of music. He worked harder than ever, so that Harding was pleased and let him go home early. He wandered the hours away by the bank of a brook, watching the sun on the face of the chuckling water. A bird came to circle him, flew unafraid through the aura of gladness about him. The delicate tip of a wing brushed his wrist with the touch of the first secret kiss from the hands of Bianca. The singing that filled him was part of the nature of laughing, the running of water, the sound of the wind in the reeds by the edge of the stream. He yearned for the hands, and he knew he could go now and clasp them and own them; instead he stretched out on the bank and lay smiling, all lost in the sweetness and poignance of waiting, denying desire. He laughed for pure joy in a world without hatred, held in the stainless palms of Bianca's hands.

As it grew dark he went home. All during that nuptial meal Bianca's hands twisted about one of his while he ate with the other, and Bianca's mother fed the girl. The fingers twined about each other and about his own, so that three hands seemed to be wrought of one flesh, to become a thing of lovely weight at his arm's end. When it was quite dark they went to the beautiful room and lay where he and the hands could watch, through the window, the clean, bright stars swim up out of the forest. The house and the room were dark and silent. Ran was so happy that he hardly dared to breathe.

A hand fluttered up over his hair, down his cheek, and crawled into the hollow of his throat. Its pulsing matched the beat of his heart. He opened his own hands wide and clenched his fingers, as though to catch and hold this moment.

Soon the other hand crept up and joined the first. For perhaps an hour they lay there passive with their coolness against Ran's warm neck. He felt them with his throat, each smooth convolution, each firm small expanse. He concentrated, with his mind and his heart on his throat, on each part of the hands that touched him, feeling with all his being first one touch and then another, though

the contact was there unmoving. And he knew it would be soon now, soon.

As if at a command, he turned on his back and dug his head into the pillow. Staring up at the vague dark hangings on the wall, he began to realize what it was for which he had been working and dreaming so long. He put his head back yet farther and smiled, waiting. This would be possession, completion. He breathed deeply, twice, and the hands began to move.

The thumbs crossed over his throat and the fingertips settled one by one under his ears. For a long moment they lay there, gathering strength. Together, then, in perfect harmony, each co-operating with the other, they became rigid, rock-hard. Their touch was still light upon him, still light . . . no, now they were passing their rigidity to him, turning it to a contraction. They settled to it slowly, their pressure measured and equal. Ran lay silent. He could not breathe now, and did not want to. His great arms were crossed on his chest, his knotted fists under his armpits, his mind knowing a great peace. Soon, now . . .

Wave after wave of engulfing, glorious pain spread and receded. He saw colour impossible, without light. He arched his back, up, up . . . the hands bore down with all their hidden strength, and Ran's body bent like a bow, resting on feet and shoulders. Up, up . . .

Something burst within him—his lungs, his heart—no matter. It was complete.

There was blood on the hands of Bianca's mother when they found her in the morning in the beautiful room, trying to soothe Ran's neck. They took Bianca away, and they buried Ran, but they hanged Bianca's mother because she tried to make them believe Bianca had done it, Bianca whose hands were quite dead, drooping like brown leaves from her wrists.

* * *

DUTY'S DAUGHTER

There are foure reasons why the woman is to goe abroad. First, to come to holy meetings, according to the dutie of godlinesse. The second, to visit such as stand in neede, as the dutie of love and charitie doth require. The third, for employment and provision in household affaires committed to her charge. And lastly, with her husband, when hee shall require her.

ROBERT CLEAVER, *A godlie Forme of Household Government*, ed. 1600

★*What did happen to the young man in St. Luke's story, whom Christ's touch restored to life outside the gates of the village of Nain? Could it have been at all like this? What would it do to a man to get such a second chance? And to his friends? But there's no point in asking questions till you've read what Graham Greene has to say. To this rather terrifying and wholly unusual story he brings the full mastery of his art as a writer—*

SECOND DEATH

—"and He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still" . . .

by GRAHAM GREENE

SHE found me in the evening under trees that grew outside the village. I had never cared for her and would have hidden myself if I'd seen her coming. She was to blame, I'm certain, for her son's vices. If they were vices, but I'm very far from admitting that they were. At any rate he was generous, never mean, like others in the village I could mention if I chose.

I was staring hard at a leaf or she would never have found me. It was dangling from its twig, its stalk torn across by the wind or else by a stone one of the village children had flung. Only the green tough skin of the stalk held it there suspended. I was watching closely, because a caterpillar was crawling across the surface, making the leaf sway to and fro. The caterpillar was aiming at the twig, and I wondered whether it would reach it in safety or whether the leaf would fall with it into the water. There was a pool underneath the trees, and the water always appeared red, because of the heavy clay in the soil.

I never knew whether the caterpillar reached the twig, for, as I've said, the wretched woman found me. The first I knew of her coming was her voice just behind my ear.

"I've been looking in all the pubs for you," she said in her old shrill voice. It was typical of her to say "all the pubs" when there were only two in the place. She always wanted credit for trouble she hadn't really taken.

I was annoyed and I couldn't help speaking a little harshly. "You might have saved yourself the trouble," I said, "you should have known I wouldn't be in a pub on a fine night like this."

The old vixen became quite humble. She was always smooth enough when she wanted anything. "It's for my poor son," she said. That meant that he was ill. When he was well I never heard her say anything better than "that dratted boy." She'd make him be in the house by midnight every day of the week, as if there were any serious mischief a man could get up to in a little village like ours. Of course we soon found a way to cheat her, but it was the principle of the thing I objected to—a grown man of over thirty ordered about by his mother, just because she hadn't a husband to control. But when he was ill, though it might be only with a small chill, it was "my poor son."

"He's dying," she said, "and God knows what I shall do without him."

"Well, I don't see how I can help you," I said. I was angry, because he'd been dying once before and she'd done everything but actually bury him. I imagined it was the same sort of dying this time, the sort a man gets over. I'd seen him about the week before on his way up the hill to see the big breasted girl at the farm. I'd watched him till he was like a little black dot, which stayed suddenly by a square grey box in a field. That was the barn where they used to meet. I've very good eyes and it amuses me to try how far and how clearly they can see. I met him again some time after midnight and helped him get into the house without his mother knowing, and he was well enough then—only a little sleepy and tired.

The old vixen was at it again. "He's been asking for you," she shrilled at me.

"If he's as ill as you make out," I said, "it would be better for him to ask for a doctor."

"Doctor's there, but he can't do anything." That startled me for a moment, I'll admit, until I thought, "The old devil's malingering. He's got some plan or other." He was quite clever enough to cheat a doctor. I had seen him throw a fit that would have deceived Moses.

"For God's sake come," she said, "he seems frightened." Her voice broke quite genuinely, for I suppose in her way she was fond of him. I couldn't help pitying her a little, for I knew that he had never cared a mite for her and had never troubled to disguise the fact.

I left the trees and the red pool and the struggling caterpillar, for I knew that she would never leave me alone, now that her "poor boy" was asking for me. Yet a week ago there was nothing she wouldn't have done to keep us apart. She thought me responsible for his ways, as though any mortal man could have held him off a likely woman when his appetite was up.

I think it must have been the first time I had entered their

cottage by the front door, since I came to the village ten years ago. I threw an amused glance at his window. I thought I could see the marks on the wall of the ladder we'd used the week before. We'd had a little difficulty in putting it straight, but his mother slept sound. He had brought the ladder down from the barn, and when he'd got safely in, I carried it up there again. But you could never trust his word. He'd lie to his best friend, and when I reached the barn I found the girl had gone. If he couldn't bribe you with his mother's money, he'd bribe you with other people's promises.

I began to feel uneasy directly I got inside the door. It was natural that the house should be quiet, for the pair of them never had any friends to stay, although the old woman had a sister-in-law living only a few miles away. But I didn't like the sound of the doctor's feet, as he came downstairs to meet us. He'd twisted his face into a pious solemnity for our benefit, as though there was something holy about death, even about the death of my friend.

"He's conscious," he said, "but he's going. There's nothing I can do. If you want him to die in peace, better let his friend go along up. He's frightened about something."

The doctor was right. I could tell that as soon as I bent under the lintel and entered my friend's room. He was propped up on a pillow, and his eyes were on the door, waiting for me to come. They were very bright and frightened, and his hair lay across his forehead in sticky stripes. I'd never realised before what an ugly fellow he was. He had got sly eyes that looked at you too much out of the corners, but when he was in ordinary health, they held a twinkle that made you forget the slyness. There was something pleasant and brazen in the twinkle, as much as to say "I know I'm sly and ugly. But what does that matter? I've got guts." It was that twinkle, I think, some women found attractive and stimulating. Now when the twinkle was gone, he looked a rogue and nothing else.

I thought it my duty to cheer him up, so I made a small joke out of the fact that he was alone in bed. He didn't seem to relish it, and I was beginning to fear that he, too, was taking a religious view of his death, when he told me to sit down quite sharply.

"I'm dying," he said, speaking very fast, "and I want to ask you something. That doctor's no good—he'd think me delirious. I'm frightened, old man. I want to be reassured," and then after a long pause, "someone with common sense." He slipped a little further down in his bed.

"I've only once been badly ill before," he said. "That was before you settled here. I wasn't much more than a boy. People tell me that I was even supposed to be dead. They were carrying me out to burial, when a doctor stopped them just in time."

I'd heard plenty of cases like that, and I saw no reason why he

should want to tell me about it. And then I thought I saw his point. His mother had not been too anxious once before to see if he were properly dead, though I had little doubt that she made a great show of grief—" My poor boy. I don't know what I shall do without him." And I'm certain that she believed herself then, as she believed herself now. She wasn't a murderess. She was only inclined to be premature.

" Look here, old man," I said, and I propped him a little higher on his pillow, " you needn't be frightened. You aren't going to die, and anyway, I'd see that the doctor cut a vein or something before they moved you. But that's all morbid stuff. Why, I'd stake my shirt that you've got plenty more years in front of you. And plenty more girls too," I added to make him smile.

" Can't you cut out all that ? " he said. I knew then that he had turned religious. " Why," he said, " if I lived, I wouldn't touch another girl. I wouldn't, not one."

I tried not to smile at that, but it wasn't easy to keep a straight face. There's always something a bit funny about a sick man's morals. " Anyway," I said, " you needn't be frightened."

" It's not that," he said. " Old man, when I came round that other time, I thought that I'd been dead. It wasn't like sleep at all. Or rest in peace. There was someone there, all round me, who knew everything. Every girl I'd ever had. Even that young one who hadn't understood. It was before your time. She lived a mile down the road, where Rachel lives now, but she and her family went away afterwards. Even the money I'd taken from mother. I don't call that stealing. It's in the family. I never had a chance to explain. Even the thoughts I'd had. A man can't help his thoughts."

" A nightmare," I said.

" Yes, it must have been a dream, mustn't it ? The sort of dream people do get when they are ill. And I saw what was coming to me too. I can't bear being hurt. It wasn't fair. And I wanted to faint and I couldn't, because I was dead."

" In the dream," I said. His fear made me nervous. " In the dream," I said again.

" Yes, it must have been a dream—mustn't it ?—because I woke up. The curious thing was I felt quite well and strong. I got up and stood in the road, and a little further down, kicking up the dust, was a small crowd, going off with a man—the doctor who had stopped them burying me."

" Well," I said.

" Old man," he said, " suppose it was true. Suppose I had been dead. I believed it then, you know, and so did my mother. But you can't trust her. I went straight for a couple of years. I thought it might be a sort of second chance. Then things got fogged and

somehow . . . It didn't seem really possible. It's not possible. Of course, it's not possible. You know it isn't, don't you ? "

" Why no," I said. " Miracles of that sort don't happen nowadays. And anyway, they aren't likely to happen to you are they ? And here of all places under the sun."

" It would be so dreadful," he said, " if it had been true, and I'd got to go through all that again. You don't know what things were going to happen to me in that dream. And they'd be worse now." He stopped and then, after a moment, he added as though he were stating a fact: " When one's dead there's no unconsciousness any more for ever."

" Of course it was a dream," I said and squeezed his hand. He was frightening me with his fancies. I wished that he'd die quickly, so that I could get away from his sly, bloodshot and terrified eyes and see something cheerful and amusing, like the Rachel he had mentioned, who lived a mile down the road.

" Why," I said, " if there had been a man about working miracles like that we should have heard of others, you may be sure. Even poked away in this God-forsaken spot," I said.

" There were some others," he said. " But the stories only went round among the poor, and they'll believe anything, won't they ? There were lots of diseased and crippled they said he'd cured. And there was a man who'd been born blind and he came and just touched his eyelids and sight came to him. Those were all old wives' tales, weren't they ? " he asked me, stammering with fear, and then lying suddenly still and bunched up at the side of the bed.

I began to say, " Of course they were all lies," but I stopped because there was no need. All I could do was to go downstairs and tell his mother to come up and close his eyes. I wouldn't have touched them for all the money in the world. It was a long time since I'd thought of the day, ages and ages ago, when I felt a cold touch like spittle on my lids and opening my eyes had seen a man like a tree surrounded by other trees walking away.

* * *

LOADSTONE

Out of the veins of the world comes the blood of me ;
The heart that beats in my side is the heart of the sea ;
The hills have known me of old, and they do not forget ;
Long ago was I friends with the wind ; I am friends with it yet . . .

Out of the red-brown earth, out of the grey-brown streams,
Came this perilous body, cage of perilous dreams ;
To the ends of all waters and lands they are tossed, they are whirled,
For my dreams are one with my body, yea, one with the world.

GERALD GOULD

NONE BUT THE BRAVE

Women are the gate of hell

ST. JEROME

Isaiah . . . explained that,

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet,

the Lord would smite these ladies with scabs on the scalp and other physical penalties. The offence given was due to their gauds, catalogued as follows: Bravery of tinkling ornaments about their feet, cauls (hair-nets), round tires like the moon, chains, bracelets, mufflers, bonnets, ornaments of the legs, head-bands, tablets, ear-rings, rings, nose-jewels, changeable suits of apparel, mantles, wimples, crisping-pins, glasses, fine linen, hoods, and veils. On the whole, these tinklers of Zion seem to have been well-equipped vessels of vanity.

IVOR BROWN, *I Give You My Word*

Wanton

When I saw him tangled in her toils,
A shame, said I, if she adds just him
To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,
The hundredth, for a whim! . . .

So, I gave her eyes my own eyes to take,
My hand sought hers as in earnest need,
And round she turned for my noble sake,
And gave me herself indeed . . .

And she,—she lies in my hand as tame
As a pear late basking over a wall;
Just a touch to try and off it came;
'Tis mine,—can I let it fall?

With no mind to eat it, that's the worst!
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist?
'Twas quenching a dozen blue-flies thirst
When I gave its stalk a twist . . .

ROBERT BROWNING, 1812-1889

Blue Stocking

There was no light nonsense about Miss Blimber . . . She was dry and sandy with working in the graves of deceased languages. None of your live languages for Miss Blimber. They must be dead—stone dead—and then Miss Blimber dug them up like a ghoul.

CHARLES DICKENS, 1812-1870, *Dombey and Son*

Peg o' My Heart

An aged female, on crutches, and with only one leg, was charged before me by an overseer with abusive language and violent conduct in a workhouse to an extent beyond all bearing. Her defence, amongst other things, was that she was kept a close prisoner ; to which it was answered that the parish had gone to the expense of thirty shillings to purchase her wooden leg, and that the first time she was allowed a holiday she got drunk, pawned her leg for a shilling, and was brought back in a helpless state of intoxication.

THOMAS WALKER, 1784-1836, *The Original*

The Green Eye and the Little Feathered God

The dining room opened on a little courtyard . . . transformed by me into a sort of infirmary and convalescent home for my various animals. Among them was a little owl . . .

I had found it in the Campagna with a broken wing, half dead of hunger. Its wing healed, I had twice taken it back where I had found it and set it free ; twice it had flown back to my carriage to perch on my shoulder . . . Since then the little owl was sitting on her perch in the corner of the dining room, looking lovingly at me with her golden eyes . . .

Among the patients admitted to the dining room was a very excitable young Russian lady, who was giving me lots of trouble . . . This lady got so jealous of the owl . . . that I had to give strict orders to Anna never to leave these two alone in the room. One day on coming in to luncheon Anna told me that the Russian lady had just called with a dead mouse wrapped in paper. She had caught it in her room, and she felt sure the owl would like it for breakfast. The owl knew better ; after having bitten off its head, owl fashion, she refused to eat it. I took it to an English chemist ; it contained enough arsenic to kill a cat.

AXEL MUNTHE, *The Story of San Michele*

Fiery Words

Dr. Edward Davenant told me that this learned man, Thomas Cooper, had a shrew to his wife, who was irreconcileably angry with him for sitting up late at night so, compiling his dictionary. When he had half done it, she had the opportunity to get into his study, took all his pains out in her lap, and threw it in the fire and burnt it . . .

JOHN AUBREY, 1626-1697, *Brief Lives*

Grass Widow

It ain't the feed, said the young man John—it's the old woman's look when a fellah lays it in too strong. The feed's well enough. After geese have got tough, 'n' turkeys have got strong, 'n' lamb's got old, 'n' veal's pretty nigh beef, 'n' sparragrass's growin' tall 'n' slim 'n' scattery about the head, 'n' green peas are gettin' so big 'n' hard they'd be dangerous if you fired 'em out of a revolver, we get hold of all them delicacies of the season.

But it's too much like feedin' on live folks and devourin' widdah's substance . . . I can't help looking at the old woman. Corned-beef-days she's tolerable calm. Roastin' days she worries some, 'n' keeps a sharp eye on the chap that carves. But when there's anything in the poultry line, it seems to hurt her feelin's so to see the knife goin' into the breast and joints comin' to pieces, that there's no comfort in eatin'. When I cut up an old fowl and help the boarders, I always feel as if I ought to say, Won't you have a slice of widdah ?—instead of chicken.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, 1809-1894,
The Professor at the Breakfast Table

Provocation to Violence

" I've been thinking it over," he said, when the bitter argument was over, " and I have decided to agree with you."

" It won't do you any good," she said, " I've changed my mind."

Told by ARTHUR MURRAY

The Holy State

Better to sit up all night than to go to bed with a dragon.

JEREMY TAYLOR, 1613-1667

BAD LUCK McCALL

The man who had lost three ships in four years

by WILLIAM HOLDER

WE were due to sail at nine, but at eight o'clock the chief mate slipped on the rain-glazed ladder leading to the boat deck and broke an arm. They took him off, and the Old Man roused someone at the company's offices and told them to shake themselves and get a mate aboard, since he had no intention of spending the rest of his life tied to a pier in the North River.

He got a mate. The man came aboard at ten o'clock in a furious, driving rain, and three minutes later the tugs were hauling us away from the dock out into the stream, heading the bow of the *Louise Vickers* in the general direction of Cherbourg.

I had the watch and was standing in the wheelhouse, relaying to the helmsman the orders of the pilot, who was out on the bridge wing. The conversation taking place in the captain's cabin, just aft of the wheelhouse, came to me clearly. Captain Thompson was a thin old wisp of a man, but his voice was as sharp and penetrating as the blade of a well-honed knife.

"I don't know why they sent me you, mister, when I asked for a mate. I've been giving this company satisfactory service for years and certainly deserve better treatment."

The new mate's voice was low, even, controlled. "The situation is no more pleasing to myself than it is to you. Had I more choice in the matter of ships, I'd not have accepted this one."

"You've master's papers, or so I've heard. Why do you sail as mate? There's no lack of ships."

"There's a lack of ships for me, as you well know."

I could almost see the captain smile, almost see him nod. Those things were in his voice, but no pleasantness. "Well, you know the sort of ship I keep, what I expect to be done. And try—try very hard—not to sink us. I've never lost a ship. That will be all, Mr. McCall."

And that name made part of the conversation understandable. McCall. Bad-Luck McCall. The man who had lost three ships in four years, but who, it seemed, would never get another. He

was the son of misfortune, and no sailor or any steamship company wanted anything to do with him. He was a salt-stained nightmare to every man who rode the sea. He was bad luck.

It was a McCall run from the first moment. The night was as black as the inside of a cat and the rain was driving and chill. As soon as we cleared Sandy Hook we caught a heavy sea pushed by a freshening south-east wind, and the *Vickers* began to labour slightly. She was a fine big freighter and her virtues were many, but sea kindliness was not one of them. She did her work heavily, with a lack of that certain grace some ships possess. But tonight she seemed to be behaving a bit more awkwardly than usual. Perhaps she had begun to feel the presence of McCall.

It really began when we dropped the pilot. The launch came alongside, rising swiftly, then dipping sharply into the trough, and we made a lee for her. The pilot went down the ladder, made the launch, and then it happened. The *Vickers* rolled slightly just as the launch rose on a swell, and on the bridge I could hear the smash as her stem and forward frames splintered.

McCall was on deck. I recognized his voice, louder now, but even and unhurried. He took charge as if this happened to him every day. We had a bit of way on, and faster than I thought it could be done, he had a line on the launch. She swung with her stern to the sea, and her sternway served to keep her from taking water through her cracked bow. We held her like that until the pilot boat, summoned by our blinker light, came over and took charge.

The Old Man was on the bridge during the entire proceedings. When the pilot boat and the crippled launch were clear and we were under way once again, he walked through the wheelhouse to the chart room. He was shaking his head, and I heard him say, "Whoever sent that man aboard—"

Rodgers relieved me at midnight. Rodgers was six feet two, had shoulders like a hatch beam, and brought his favourite whisky aboard in five-gallon barrels. On our last trip to Oran, Rodgers had been arrested in a brawl in a shore dive, and the Old Man wouldn't have allowed him to set foot on the dock the ship was tied to if Rodgers hadn't been one of the finest navigators of the world. He spoke five languages well and his voice was the gentlest I've ever heard. He was seventy years old.

"A fine night, Mr. Sherwood," he said. "A bit of breeze and a touch of rain and the faintest suggestion of a sea running, but all in all, a fine night."

"A fine night for McCall," I said.

He looked at me, then shook his great white head. "You're young, and superstition still in you, to think that weather recognizes

the sound of a man's name. Sailors' tales and old wives' tales are both born to be ignored. And what's the course?"

I gave it to him as if it were news, and he accepted it with a pleased smile, as if he had not plotted it himself. I said, "Nevertheless, smashing that pilot launch was unusual. The Old Man said—"

Rodgers shook his head again, and said in his gentle voice, "The Old Man's not thinking of the launch, lad. He's got his mind on his daughter when he looks at McCall."

"His daughter? What's his daughter got to do with McCall?"

"Nothing," Rodgers said, "if the Old Man has his way."

I hadn't known there was a personal side to the captain's evident dislike of McCall. "I thought it was just because he'd lost so many ships."

"Three," Rodgers said. "He was torpedoed once off Greenland, and his next ship hit a mine in the Irish Sea. Later, he was in collision with a tanker, in a big convoy that was creeping through heavy fog off the Banks, and if the tanker's skipper had lived, he would have lost his ticket."

It didn't sound bad when Rodgers recited it like that. Those things happened to ships. "But one man," I said. "Will anything decent ever happen to him?"

Rodgers nodded. "I think so. In the normal cycle of events, most of his fortune from now on should be good. Some men encounter trouble in its various forms all their lives. A man will fall and break a leg one year, lose his teeth another, and five years later his wife will run off with some young fellow with curly hair, and take the family savings with her. McCall's troubles are arriving in a crowd. He's having them now, having done with them, and the remainder of his life should be fortunate, does he survive them."

"Well, I hope he survives this trip," I said. "He, and us with him. I've got my fingers crossed."

"And your brains," Rodgers said.

But I wasn't alone in the way I felt. The thing ran through the ship quickly, and you could hear it and feel it and almost smell it. By morning, everyone on the *Vickers* knew that Bad-Luck McCall was aboard, and it was the sole topic of conversation.

Fletcher, the chief engineer, came into the saloon mess with a scowl on his face. He sat at the skipper's table and, without preliminaries, said, "You should never have signed him on. The man carries ill luck with him like a ring that won't come off his finger."

The Old Man said, "You've forgotten something, Mr. Fletcher. The *Louise Vickers* isn't McCall's ship; it's mine."

"Which is no matter," Fletcher answered. "Bad luck followed him up the gangway."

At ten minutes to eight I was on the bridge to relieve McCall. We carried but three deck officers, and the chief mate stood the four-to-eight watch. It was the first time I had seen him. I was surprised.

He was a tall, spare man, and dark, about thirty, and when he turned to me, I saw that his features were strong almost to the point of harshness. His eyes were blue, and I could feel their cool, measuring impact.

I said, "I'm Sherwood, the third mate."

He nodded. "My name's McCall. Glad to know you." He gave me the course, showed me the log, and signed for his watch. There was a tightness about him that was neither defiance nor apology, merely a flat statement of sufficiency. He needed no help, would accept neither a condolence nor an affront. I liked him at once.

When McCall had gone below, Lewis, the A.B. at the wheel, said, "And this'll be a fine trip. Watch the old bucket fall apart or blow up. I had a kid brother who sailed with McCall. He never came back."

"I had an older brother who was lost off the Cape coast," I said. "He was sailing with a skipper named Bishop. He'd never heard of McCall." I was a little surprised at myself.

But the ship had the fever. Everyone seemed to sit back and wait for something to happen. I knew how the deck gang felt. Every man on my watch had a story to tell about McCall. It seemed that they all knew someone who knew someone who had been touched by the shadow of the misfortune that trailed McCall like an ugly, shrewish but faithful mistress.

And the attitude of the engine-room crowd was reflected in the restlessness of Fletcher. He was waiting, almost anxiously, it seemed to me, for his engines to break down, for his shaft to crack. "Mark my words," I heard him say to Rodgers, "this will be the worst trip the *Vickers* has had, if not the last."

Rodgers laughed at him. "And now you've found an excuse to cover the neglect you've shown that heap of scrap below. If anything happens, if the whistle doesn't blow, it'll be all the mate's fault."

Which was not true. The *Vickers*' engine room was as tidy as a Yorkshire kitchen. The steel and the brass were shining and polished, and it would have been a day's task to find a spot of grease upon the gleaming decks. The huge pistons moved in their clean, unceasing rhythm that was the healthy pulse of a fine ship.

The rest of the big ship was like the engine room. The Old Man kept her looking like a yacht. The day men were skilful and fast and the watches made plenty of overtime. She used a lot of paint and was a proud if somewhat hippy lady.

As bad as the weather had been at the start, it improved hardly at all. The sky was continually filled with low scud and rain, and the seas ran long and high. We were heavy-loaded with a mixed cargo and we wallowed along before the weather, everyone blaming each grey dawn on McCall, everyone cursing him for the rain-lashed nights.

McCall worked hard, and in spite of the foul weather, the *Vickers* lost none of her handsomeness. The moment the weather broke for a few hours, he had his gang painting, and when the rain set in again, he turned them to, keeping the gear in shape.

It was the fourth day out before I got Rodgers talking again. I had just relieved the mate for supper. I came down from the bridge and passed Rodgers' cabin on the way to my own.

His door was open, and he called, " Come in, lad ! Come in ! " I entered the cabin, and he said, " And close the door, like a good lad." I closed it, and he reached into a locker and came up with one of his barrels. " A spot of the tea ? A fine night for it."

I shook my head. I had to go on watch.

He sympathized with me. " But it's a man of my age that needs a bit of warmth in him on a night like this. You young fellows can well do without." He poured himself half a tumblerful, drank it and smiled happily. " It does take the curse off the weather."

I asked him about McCall and the Old Man's daughter. I'd been curious ever since he had hinted at some connection. Rodgers poured himself another huge drink, corked the barrel and set it back in the locker. He placed his great bulk carefully in his chair, tasted the whisky and eyed me silently for a moment.

" You look like a man who can hold his tongue, Mr. Sherwood, so I've told you a little and I'll tell you the lot. But it would do no good were the story to get around the ship."

" I'm anxious to satisfy no curiosity but my own."

He nodded. " You're reasonable enough." The glass was tipped again, but not emptied. " Both the Old Man and McCall are from the same port. Their fathers and forefathers have been sailing the seven seas for over a hundred years. They've been born near the water and bred to the sound of the wind, and there is sea spray in the blood of all of them."

" Then why," I asked, " is there this difference between them ? Why does the Old Man dislike McCall ? "

" He does not dislike him," Rodgers said. " He hates him. For, a bit over twenty years ago, his wife sailed on a ship skippered

by McCall's father. It was late in the autumn, they were crossing the Atlantic, and the weather monstrous. The ship piled up on an iceberg in the night and thirty-seven people were lost, including both the Old Man's wife and old Jack McCall."

"But that's no reason—"

"A man's heart is sometimes an unreasonable thing," Rodgers said, "both in love and in hate. And when the two emotions are combined through circumstance, the result is rarely wisdom. The Old Man believes McCall's father was responsible for the death of his wife. He hates the name and any man who bears the name, and knowing all this, it's easy to see why he objects to McCall as suitor for his daughter. The two were children together, but once the worm entered the Old Man's heart, he made certain his daughter did not see McCall." Rodgers finished his glass. "But when a man's at sea most of the time, he can't govern the actions of a spirited girl. Strength is in the young, and love is in the young, and I think there's a bit of fear in the Old Man."

"It's an interesting story," I said. Rodgers agreed with a nod. "It is that. And the end of it—whatever it may be—will be interesting, too."

And when I relieved McCall at eight o'clock I looked upon the man with a new interest and a new sympathy. He bore the burden of his misfortunes with his own ships, and over him, like a cloud, hung the shadow of his father's tragedy. He carried the heavy load well. The broad shoulders were not bowed under it, and the only place the pressure showed was in his eyes. Doubt had unmistakably touched them, and a shadow that might have been fear. But these things had not stayed. They had touched him and somehow strengthened him, and were not a part of him now.

The Old Man rode him. He complained of the condition of the decks, of the ship's boats, of a trace of rust on the cargo runners. And the ship was tense, the Captain's irritability reaching down through the crew like the fingers of a heavy fog. There was a savage fight between an oiler and an A.B. in the crew's mess that McCall had to stop, and on the seventh day out, in rotten weather, Chips went forward in the morning to sound the bilges. He slipped in a trickle of oil from a winch and lay there cursing with a broken leg. The very next day, the ordinary on the twelve-to-four lost a finger trying to secure an unfastened, swinging, watertight door.

It was that sort of voyage. A McCall trip, everyone termed it. Small incidents that occur every day, ordinarily, and which usually pass unnoticed, were lumped in a mighty mass of damnation against the mate. Rodgers and myself, I think, were the only ones aboard who spoke to him at all. The others raged at him behind his back, accepted his presence with glowering silence.

The way he took it was an admirable thing, for the hostility of an entire ship is too great a burden for most men. It did not defeat McCall. He made no overtures, answered silence with silence, and his eyes were more direct, more forceful, than those of the men who strangely hated him for his own misfortune. His dignity was unassailable, and rode his wide shoulders like a magnificent cape.

I felt something for the man that was not pity, for that dignity was proof against pity. Sorrow, it might have been. Sorrow that a man should be forced to bear the solitude that was his. Admiration, I knew for him, too. He was a sailor from the soles of his feet to the top of his head, and he showed me several navigational tricks that even Rodgers could not surpass.

We had trouble in the engine room, a pump breakdown which Fletcher, of course, ascribed to the influence of McCall, and we were a day late arriving in Cherbourg. The captain of the tug that handled us was sloppy and incompetent, and we slammed into the concrete wharf with a force that I thought would buckle half our plates. I, and I think everyone else on the ship, heaved a sigh of relief when the lines were finally ashore and we were tied up.

We unloaded our cargo in five days. McCall seldom left the ship. We were painting over the side, and he was busy with that, and he gave me a man to help with the lifeboats, to check the gear and make sure they were in order.

The Old Man didn't leave the ship. He hung on the bridge rail most of the day, examining proceedings with a cold and jaundiced eye. McCall gave him little opportunity for criticism. The work went quickly and it was well done.

I spoke to Rodgers one morning about the way the captain stayed on the ship.

He shrugged his huge shoulders. "The man has no interest other than his ship. He regards it with the same affection another man would lavish on a wife. And that's the explanation of the thing. Since his wife died twenty years ago, his ships receive the devotion he once tendered her. He'll leave them only when necessary, and then for as brief a period as possible. I know for a fact that he's not been home for three years. He's been on the sea so long that I don't believe the man could sleep in a level bed."

When the holds were cleared, we took on slag for ballast. I was on the boat deck, and heard McCall and the Old Man talking on the bridge wing over my head.

"I'll take some men and secure that stuff," McCall said. "We've got some old cargo runners and a lot of dunnage, and—"

The Old Man didn't let him finish. His voice was thin, his words measured. "There is neither the time nor the necessity for

that, mister. It's a late-spring crossing and the weather will be fine, and I can't spare a day to build a fence for that stuff. The owners would like the use of this ship. She makes no money carrying ballast, and I'd like to get back for a cargo, if you don't mind."

I looked up, saw McCall nod and walk away. His face was set, his shoulders rigid. I wondered how tough that pride could be, how much punishment that dignity could take before it broke.

We sailed on time, and I wondered what the return voyage held for McCall, what new trials he would be forced to endure. The trip over had done nothing to moderate the harshness of his reputation. As a matter of fact, fresh wounds had been added to the old scars, and when this crew got ashore and their tales gained circulation, his stature as a Jonah would have greatly increased.

I spoke of it to Rodgers, " How long can the man go on like this, having the blame for every miserable accident, every bit of foul weather, placed on his shoulders ? "

Rodgers shook his head. " It's a hard question to answer, son. There is great strength in McCall, and a great patience. But in a situation like this there comes a moment when either the man or the legend must break. And the story that follows him is a powerful thing, gaining weight with every voyage he makes, with every stupid, superstitious word that is spoken of him ashore." He shook his head again. " I pity the man and his future."

On the sixth day out, the Old Man fell ill. The weather was harsh and cold, for the season, and after one day in his cabin, when he saw no one, he sent for the purser, who was the medical man aboard. The purser came down to the dining saloon with a long face. The Old Man was running a high temperature, and from the various signs and portents, the purser thought he might have pneumonia.

Rodgers said, " A good spot of the tea is what he needs, but he's not a drinking man."

The chief engineer's face was lined with his frown. He said, " I'd as soon carry a cargo of snakes as that McCall."

" And now you talk like a man whose head is stuffed with cotton waste," Rodgers told him. " What could McCall have to do with this ? "

" He has only to come aboard a ship," Fletcher muttered, " and trouble is half a step behind him."

And everyone on the ship took the same attitude, of course. When anyone spoke of the Old Man's illness, McCall's name would be mentioned in the same breath.

It did not seem to affect McCall, though he was obviously aware of all that went on. His dignity was untouched ; he went

about his work with unchanging thoroughness. In his eyes there was no plea for quarter, and he was as aggressively remote as ever.

The Old Man got worse. He was delirious, the purser said, from the fever raging within him. McCall went into the skipper's cabin, when I relieved him at eight o'clock that morning, and when he came out his face was grave. I wondered just how long it would be before the terrific pressure of opinion would convince the man himself that disaster was his ever-present twin.

The weather hit us the next day with only a two-hour warning. The glass dropped suddenly at noon, and by three o'clock, the *Vickers* was rolling heavily in a big sea pushed by a south-west wind. I ate at five o'clock and went up to relieve McCall. The glass was still falling.

I stood in the wheelhouse and watched her roll. She was high and light, and she was going fifteen degrees to either side as the big seas surged up to her, shoved her off balance, then swept underneath and let her roll back to meet the next. The rain was heavy, driven by the still-rising wind. I knew we had a miserable night in store for us.

When I took the watch at eight o'clock, the wind was up to fifty miles an hour. The roll was no longer amusing. She was bettering twenty degrees on every swing, heeling over until I thought she'd never stop, then coming back slowly and repeating the big dip on the other side. Down below, in the messrooms and in the galley, china crashed each time we hit the peak of the roll.

McCall stayed on the bridge. I wondered why he didn't change the course, swing the *Vickers* into this, so she'd ride more comfortably. Then he went into the Old Man's room, which was just aft the wheelhouse, for a few moments, and I had the answer to that question. Every hour we saved was an important thing. That man needed care we couldn't give him.

At eleven o'clock the seas were huge, great rolling hills that swept up to the *Vickers* with a ponderous fury, heralded by the spray from their crests. She would heel to starboard under the vast pressure, then right herself with an effort and slide down into the trough.

McCall stood at one of the bridge ports, his weight shifting with the motion of the ship. He said, "We'll have to change the course, mister. She won't stand much more of this."

And at that moment she took her worst roll. She lay over on her side, and I fought for balance, holding to the rail along the forward bulkhead, waiting for her to come back. And I heard it, then, a great, slithering, rushing sound in the bowels of the ship. It lasted for ten seconds, ten eternities, and then the *Vickers* started the return roll.

She never had a chance. The next enormous sea was on her, pushing and surging with its incalculable thousands of tons of force. The ship went to starboard again, and I knew she'd go all the way, and fear was a terrible contraction in my stomach and a great cold hand on my throat. Over the panic that rose in me, I heard a repetition of that rushing, sliding sound in the hold.

She didn't go all the way. She lay over at a forty-five-degree angle and stayed there, her bow high, her stern low. The shifting ballast had piled up in the after starboard corners of the holds, and, being unable either to go any farther or to return to its former position, held the ship at that terrible list.

We did not roll now. The factors of balance had been destroyed, and we lay there like some great and grievously wounded animal. The seas lifted us, hammered at us, then left us stricken and near dead in the great valleys between the waves.

The engines stopped, and I knew what it must be like down below. I looked at McCall, but he was moving already, climbing the slope to the port side of the wheelhouse. The harshness of his voice jerked my numb body back into action. "Get all hands aft, mister. There's work to be done if any of us want to live another hour. Send a couple of men to get whatever shovels there are in the forepeak. Tell Mr. Rodgers to stand by, here on the bridge."

We went into the holds and worked—everyone. We used shovels and buckets, and we carried the larger pieces of slag in our hands. It was a night conceived in hell. The *Vickers* lay sodden and helpless. The storm was at its height and we were part of it now, figures toiling through a mass nightmare.

And in the middle of the insane night, out of his mind with a raging fever, the captain came out on the starboard bridge wing and fell down the ladder leading to the boat deck. Someone grabbed him in time to prevent him from going over the side, but when they carried him back to his cabin, his right hip was broken.

McCall was everywhere. He drove fright out of men with his whiplash voice, turned fear into hatred of himself that found a release in the back-breaking work. He set men to building a rough fence out of cargo runners and dunnage, to restrain what ballast we reshifted. Half of us worked in the lower hold, half in the 'tween-decks. He kept us going at a pace that was insane, more than a mortal body could endure. I saw men cry and sob in their exhaustion that night, but it seemed that McCall was beside each one of us, and there was no moment given to rest.

And when, a little after dawn, the worst of the storm had passed us by, I saw him look around. The ship held a thirty-five-degree list still, but terror had gone from us now. The wind was dying and the seas had lost much of their power.

McCall said, "We should be under way in a few hours."

And we were. She waddled along like a drunk, heeled over at that absurd angle, and those men who weren't on watch were in the holds. Shifting fifteen hundred tons of slag by hand is more than a night's work. It was two days before we attained the relative safety of a twenty-five-degree list, and in comparison she seemed as level as a billiard table.

The purser and McCall made the Old Man as comfortable as possible. I went into the cabin once, with a message for McCall, and I saw the captain. He was a small, hard shadow of a man now. The fever had passed, and it had taken his strength with it. His hip was splinted in an unprofessional manner. His eyes were closed, his breathing faint and laboured. I looked at McCall, and his eyes told me nothing I did not know. Only the Old Man's toughness would keep him alive a few more days.

We made good time, considering the crazy angle we were canted at. I thought, and the idea must have occurred to McCall, of a Coast Guard 'plane. But the sea was too rough, and transfer of a man in the captain's condition would have amounted to murder. There was one way in which he could be removed from the ship—when she was tied to a pier and there were practised hands to carry him off on a stretcher. And, looking at him, I knew it would have to be soon.

A day out of harbour he was still hanging on. In the saloon, the purser shook his head. "He isn't a young man, and he's taken a beating—is still taking it. In a hospital they could care for him, if they get him in time. His pulse is weak and half the time I don't know whether he's breathing or not."

Hynes, the first assistant engineer, said, "The man who signs McCall aboard a ship, after this, should have his head examined."

Fletcher nodded and was about to speak. But Rodgers got to his feet. I had never seen him angry before, but now he was massive in his controlled rage, his face pale with the intensity of his emotion.

"You're a bunch of drooling idiots, and I'm sick of listening to your gibberish, the while you ruin a man and steal from him his future! This ship would be at the bottom of the sea right now if it weren't for McCall, and if you had the brains God promised rabbits, you'd know it! No other man could have brought her back, that night she lay over! He drove you until you were bleeding in your souls, but he saved the ship, and your lives with it! Though to what purpose I cannot imagine! McCall is no bringer of trouble, you fools! But he can smell it! He has an acquaintance with it that amounts to kinship! He can seek it out and provide against it! And it can't defeat him!" He banged his great fist

upon a table, and coffee cups shot into the air. "And if you'd stop your drooling yapping long enough to think about it, you'd realize that there isn't a man aboard big enough to carry McCall's hat!"

He stalked from the room, and left a dead silence in his wake.

We were doing ten knots when we neared Ambrose Light. When we took the pilot aboard, the purser was on the bridge, talking to McCall. "He's conscious now, but I don't know how much longer he'll last. He needs oxygen, expert attention."

McCall nodded. "We'll have him ashore in two hours." His face was tight, his whole body seemed coiled with the unrelenting tension of the past week.

The pilot was a pleasant man with most unpleasant news. He eyed the ship, shook his head in sympathy, and said, "You needn't be in a hurry now. You'll have to anchor in the bay for a few days. The tugs are all on strike. Started this morning."

I looked at McCall. His head jerked and he seemed to falter for a moment. It was just a little too much, I thought. This was the last straw. But then the line of his jaw hardened, and his voice was flat as he said, "We'll be at the dock in two hours, mister. We've a sick man aboard. We'll need no tugs."

It was noon, and Rodgers came on the bridge to relieve me. He said to McCall, "Ask for a tug, lad. Tell them your troubles. They'll send you help."

"Talk and talk," McCall replied, "while a man lies dying. They'll send a doctor out to confirm my statement, and that will take time. And then I'd wait for a tug. The hell with that. We have power and we have a rudder. We'll do without help."

I was up in the bow, taking care of the forward lines. The tide had changed an hour ago and was ebbing swiftly. He'd have one chance, and if he missed, the *Vickers* would go careening and smashing along the piers until we could get a hook to hold. It would be an unholy mess.

The men around me, I noticed suddenly, were relaxed. Morley, an A.B. on my watch, shook his head in admiration. "The man is tough. He ain't scared easy."

"And why should he?" someone asked. "That chap has been in real trouble."

I looked at them, and it was hard to believe. I knew one thing. Rodgers' blast had been heard beyond the saloon.

We pushed against the outgoing tide, quartered up to our berth, which lay between two long piers. We were going too fast and our heading was wrong, and I felt that as sure as my name was Sherwood, we would smash the northern pier. We swung with agonizing slowness then, and I heard the jangle of the engine-room telegraph as the engines were stopped. We drifted in between

the piers, carrying a great deal too much way. I thought those bells would never ring again, and then I heard them. There was an awful moment of silent drifting when I thought we'd ram the end of the slip, and then the engines turned and the screw bit frantically into the water. We were well between the piers now, out of the current, and the *Vickers* checked slowly, then hauled to a stop. We drifted ten feet, with our starboard side to the southern pier, and hit the pier with no more than a lusty thump as the telegraph jangled again and the engine stopped. The crew got the lines ashore with a roar. It had been a beautiful piece of work.

In a little while, Rodgers came forward to where they were getting a gangway up from the pier. His eyes sparkled. "Did you see it, lad? And do you get the feeling in the crew? They're a proud lot. They brought back a ship that should have sunk, and they've got a man who can put it up to a pier like a damned launch." He shook his head. "I've seen it before, but not often. There's no change in him, but only in the minds of others. One single act can make them realize they've been wrong. It is difficult of understanding, but it is the nature of men."

We'd radioed for an ambulance, and the procession came down from the bridge then—the Old Man on a stretcher. McCall walked by his side. At the gangway, they paused. Captain Thompson's voice was weak, but his eyes were bright and alive, and I knew he'd pull through.

"Mister," he said, "sometimes a man is forced to change his mind."

McCall said nothing.

"I'll recommend you to the company for a ship," the Old Man said without graciousness, for the admission of a wrong is sometimes difficult. "You're a fine sailor," he muttered. And the rest was spoken almost as an afterthought, but was the most forceful admission of his guilt that he could make. "And if you're ever near St. Mary's Bay, you might stop in and see Margaret. It would please her, and you have my permission."

"I'll thank you for the one thing, but not for the other," McCall said, but there was a ghost of a smile on his face. "If you'd take the trouble to go home now and then, you'd find you have a grandson, two years old. Robert Brendan, his name is."

Rodgers nudged me and whispered, "A sly touch. The Old Man's name."

The Old Man did not smile, but as they carried him down to the pier, he said, "A rogue's trick, mister. A rogue's trick," and there was no trace of anger in his voice.

McCall turned from the gangway, and Rodgers touched him on

the arm. He said, "Mr. McCall, I seem to remember that in my cabin is a small jug of something that you might find to your taste."

McCall looked at him for a moment, then a grin broke across his face. It was pleasant to see. "Rodgers," he said, "all in all, I consider that a very sound suggestion."

I stood there wishing that Rodgers would think to ask me along. I knew what I would drink to. To the passing of Bad-Luck McCall.

* * *

OWL SONG

This lone-fly-by-night is popular with the poets. How many of these ten quotations do you remember? Allow 5 points for the source of each you can identify, and another 5 for the poet, making a maximum score of 100. The answers are on page 95.

1. *The moping owl does to the Moon complain.*
2. *When the pie was all finished, the Owl, as a boon,*
   Was kindly permitted to pocket the spoon.
3. *My brain is dull, my sight is foul, I cannot write a verse or read—*
   Then Pallas, take away thine Owl, and let us have a lark instead.
4. *Ah, bitter chill it was! The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold.*
5. *'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,*
   And the owls have awakened the crowing cock.
6. *It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bell man,*
   Which gives the sternst good-night.
7. *Alone and warming his five wits*
   The white owl in the belfry sits.
8. *And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,*
   And a pound of Rice and a Cranberry Tart.
9. *You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure . . .*
   A hooded eagle among blinking owls.
10. *Sadder than owlsongs or the midnight blast,*
    Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so."

REVENGE

"That's him," she whispered, "That's him"

by SAMUEL BLAS

TWILIGHT is settling in the valley. Far below us pale lights are beginning to flicker and the spreading pattern of the town slowly comes alive. As the winding road narrows to the top the sound of the motor grows louder in the thin air, within the enclosing silence through which we move.

In the pale blue haze on my left the deepening dusk mingles with the vast silence that seems to suspend the day. A square yellow sign ahead blazes in our headlights: DANGER! SHARP CURVE AHEAD. On Elsa's side the low branches of a solitary tree rush by, scraping the top of the car.

Elsa, too, is part of the surrounding silence. Beside me she stares straight ahead. For a long time now she has not spoken; she neither smiles nor is sorrowful. Her expression is grave, almost serene, as if there were not such things as tears or laughter.

But this morning she smiled. A half day's journey away, in the cool morning of a quiet glade she stepped from our trailer door and smiled softly as she waved me off to the town. She blushed when I turned back a step to kiss her again. And when I finally drove off, the sweet touch of her hand still tingled in my palm.

Life was wonderful. I drove happily across the moors to the small town near by to buy provisions. We had decided to stay a few days more in this pleasant spot we had found. There could be no better place to finish out our honeymoon. As I neared the town I thought it would be fun to add a gift for Elsa to the stuff that I would carry back.

It was nearing lunch time when I started back. I had piled food enough in the car to last us a week. While I waited for a traffic light to change, a newsboy came by. I bought a paper. It carried a headline reporting the capture of an escaped convict near by. His companion was still at large. "Presumed Hiding In the Woods Near the Prison."

I ran quickly through the rest. When the lights changed I moved and put on speed. The big prison was not really very close,

but too near to suit me, in the circumstances. I felt uneasy, with Elsa alone in the trailer. It was possible, of course, that the fugitive convict might still be on the moors; but what disturbed me more was the thought that Elsa might have picked up the news on our wireless. If she had, she would be frightened.

The road twisted and turned around thinly wooded ridges and hills, and as I swung round each curve I chided myself for leaving Elsa alone. I reminded myself that she had insisted I shop without her. "I have a surprise," she had said with the only artfulness she knew—a shy, secret smile. My attention returned to the road.

The winding turns ended and the last stretch was a long straight drive across the open moor which somehow eased my anxiety. Not much further now. I imagined the way she would welcome me. She would staunchly deny that she had been afraid but she would hold my arm tightly. And then all of a sudden she would forget the whole thing. She would smile happily and tell me to close my eyes. How I loved that smile!

In the short while that I had known her and in the single month of our marriage I had grown to cherish that smile and the soft, rich laughter that sometimes accompanied it. So strange, that warm directness with which she shared my life, for in the presence of other men there was only shyness. I think that she was afraid of men. Something in her slender glowing warmth made their blood stir. She knew that, faintly, innocently. When the bold ones stared at her she would ask me to hold her close and never tell me why.

The sun was near high noon when I turned into the clearing and stopped the car, feeling relieved because I had come so quickly. I looked towards the trailer, expecting to see Elsa's welcoming figure there. My complacency ended. There in the clear sunlight I saw wisps of smoke about our home, thin plumes slipping through the unlatched door.

Wild leaves fluttered across the grass. And a wavering silence to which I listened stupidly. Then I ran to the caravan door and swung it open violently.

An acrid fog swirled about me, making me choke and cough. A curling heavy mist clung to the ceiling. I swung the door wider and flailed my arms to clear the air. And as the fog lifted and shifted I saw with some relief that there was no fire. Our dinner was smoking and burning upon the stove. Three chops—I can see them yet—shrivelled and black in a blackened frying pan; string beans in a burning pot, brown where the water had been; and in the small oven, where I later found it, a crumbling burnt blob that must once have been Elsa's first cake—the surprise she had promised me.

Panic got hold of me.

"Elsa!" I called.

There was no reply.

"Elsa!" I repeated. "Elsa!"

But only the crackle of the burning pot answered me, and outside a thin echo wandered in the trees.

Trying to understand what had happened I rejected a dozen answers at once. She would never have left the food to burn for any sort of errand. Nor were there neighbours about with whom to fall into forgetful conversation. We were alone. Then as I stood there in the silence I suddenly heard that faint sound, a rising and falling as of someone weakly breathing. Behind the curtain that secluded our bed—Elsa!

I faced about and tore aside the curtain—

There she lay. Pale, still. I kneeled beside her. She was barely breathing.

"Elsa," I whispered.

She seemed neither to move nor to make any sound, yet I knew she was breathing, for I had heard her. I rubbed her wrists and temples. I shook her gently, then fearfully. She stirred a little.

I wanted to get a doctor, yet I was afraid to leave. Then I remembered the brandy. I fumbled in the cupboard and my hand trembled as I poured a glassful and spooned a little between her lips.

At last it took effect. Her lips moved. Her expression altered, she sputtered, she coughed, and her eyes opened weakly.

At first they were blank. A long second passed while I held her hands tightly. Then, as if awareness had just touched her, horror filled her eyes and she moaned.

Then as I gathered her into my arms and let the sheet that covered her fall away, I saw that she was naked—completely.

There were bruises on her body, as if someone had beaten her: cruel bruises on her shoulders where callous fingers had pressed; angry marks where heavy fists had struck her.

Those numb moments beside my wife are not easily recalled, filled as they are with shame and a fierce anger. When at last she stirred again in my arms I held her tight and looked beyond her so that she would not see the anguish in my eyes. For long minutes she shivered; then she sobbed pitifully. Finally the tears and trembling stopped.

In a flat voice that frightened me she said, "He killed me . . . he killed me."

How I gathered the tangled threads of those dreadful hours I cannot entirely remember. For a long time I cradled and comforted her, as though she were a child. After a while she seemed

to respond. But then, when she shuddered again my anger mounted; I lost control and stormed at her with furious questions: "Who?" I demanded. "Who?" and "When?" and "How?" Until haltingly the brutal story came out. How a man knocked—

"A man?"

"Yes, a man selling something."

"Are you sure? Was he carrying a suitcase, something to show?"

"Yes."

A salesman. Then it was not the convict. Nothing reasonable. It was an ordinary man, ordinary.

How he knocked, interrupting her cooking; how he smiled and edged inside, eyeing her boldly while he chattered about kitchenware. How he touched her arm and seized her and how when she resisted he held her and—and how she finally fainted away.

As she talked she seemed to fall under a spell of horror that produced in her a curious calm. She repeated, "He killed me, he killed me . . ." until I had to shake her to make her stop. Her eyes, I saw, stared straight ahead as she said over those dreadful words and it seemed as though she saw that man, that menacing figure, in the hopeless distance.

I never thought once of the police. Only one impulse was in me, a dreadful agonizing craving for revenge. "I'll find him!" I swore. "I'll kill him . . ."

Her hand clutched mine as if to restrain me, but when she felt the anger in my grip her mood abruptly changed and she said quietly, "Yes . . . yes." And when I asked whether she would come with me, help me to find him, she nodded, eagerly I thought.

We drove to the outskirts of the town, where she listened carefully to my instructions, nodding with a sort of unearthly calm.

"We'll drive slowly," I told her. And this we did for perhaps a half hour, examining every passerby as we moved back and forth through the unhurried roads. The sun still hung heavy above us as we turned a third time down the town's main street.

There were a few parked cars, and a thin afternoon crowd was lazily inspecting the shop windows. A man lounging near the inn disinterestedly picked his teeth. It seemed to me he observed our slow progress curiously. I directed my wife's attention to him but she gravely shook her head. Then suddenly she gripped my arm. Her lips fell open and her face paled. She pointed at a shabby car parked near the inn. A man was locking the car door.

"*That's him!*" she whispered.

My blood quickened.

"Are you sure?" I asked finally. Her eyes followed him as he put the keys in his pocket and turned towards the inn.

"*That's him*," she repeated, "*that's him* . . ."

I stopped in front of his car and stepped out quickly. "Wait here," I said. "Don't move—." I looked about me with assumed carelessness. The lounger, I saw, was facing the other way. No one else seemed to notice me. I sauntered into the small ill-lighted hall, a few steps behind my man. I decided to wait for him near the staircase, and sure enough he soon passed me carrying his bag upstairs.

Luck was with me, for the place was empty. I followed him through the hallway to his room and knocked softly, an unexpected and unknown visitor.

I was calm then as he answered my knock. He opened the door wide.

"Why, come in," he said; he wore a welcoming grin that infuriated me.

I went in; took the hammer from the waistband of my trousers and, as he turned to walk ahead of me, I smashed him mightily on the back of his head.

A great cry escaped him; then a dismal sigh that collapsed with him to the floor. He lay still.

I stared at the crumpled figure and my fury subsided, spent by that single avenging blow. A clock ticked into my consciousness. My eyes wandered absently to the simple dressing table, the bed. In my hand the hammer was edged with blood. I tucked it back in my trousers and dropped the skirt of my coat over it. With my handkerchief I turned the knob of the door. Curiosity prompted me to glance again at the still figure on the floor, but I no longer cared. It might be hours before anything happened. I might be suspected or I might not. None of these conjectures bothered me. I was reasonably safe from suspicion; that I knew; except perhaps from this—this ordinary individual. I turned and went out quickly, closing the door behind me. And with that closed door behind me, in that quiet carpeted hallway, I at last felt clean, free of obsessing shame.

I went downstairs and out quietly. The very sleepiness of this small place made my ambling exit from the inn unnoticeable.

Elsa was still in the car, patient, gazing straight ahead, just as I had left her.

"It's done," I said.

Her head barely turned in my direction and she nodded slowly. She said one word: "Good."

Poor Elsa. So altered with shame and shock that she had grown a shell which I could not pierce. She sat silently in the car while, back at our halting place, I hooked on the trailer and made ready

for the journey. Even the food I took to her she hardly touched, nibbling once or twice, then staring into space. Perhaps when we were away from this terrible place . . .

It was evening when we stopped again. I drove as quickly as the clumsy trailer allowed past small villages, hurrying towards the big town that lies, now, below and behind us at the foot of the hills. I hoped to find in its busy streets some distraction from our lonely secret, to lose some of this horror there. Then the strain of the dreadful day took charge. A good night's sleep was all I could think of. But not in the trailer ; not yet.

Elsa agreed indifferently. We rolled ahead and merged with the other cars entering from the outskirts of the town. We would garage the trailer and stop at the best hotel. We would have a hot bath, then dinner in our room and perhaps a bottle of wine. And a good sleep, a good sleep . . . " Would you like that ? " I asked her.

I thought her expression softened ; certainly a tear glistened in her eye. I wanted to hold her in my arms to comfort her. I pointed to a hotel we were approaching.

" Would you like that one ? " I asked.

Her glance followed my pointing finger. She paled. She gripped my arm tightly and her lips parted. She stared straight ahead. Oh, God ! She stared straight ahead and pointed at a man in the street—

" *That's him,*" she whispered. " *That's him . . .*"

* * *

BELVEDERE

I have seen dawn and sunset on moors and windy hills,
Coming in solemn beauty like slow old tunes of Spain ;
I have seen the lady April bringing the daffodils,
Bringing the springing grass and the soft warm April rain.

I have heard the song of the blossoms and the old chant of the sea,
And seen strange lands from under the arched white sails of ships ;
But the loveliest things of beauty God ever has showed to me,
Are her voice, and her hair, and eyes, and the dear red curve of her lips.

JOHN MASEFIELD

THE CADDY SAID "MOO"

Or 'One good turn deserves another'

by ALEKO LILIUS

A FEW years before the war, when peace still reigned over Moroland and the realm of the Sulu Sultan, I was the guest of one of the teachers of the Indanan Agricultural School on Jolo Island. It is an American educational institution and a blessing to this betel nut chewing corner of the Philippine world.

A large coconut grove surrounded the school grounds. The Moro pupils tended coconuts as well as the vegetable garden; raising green groceries, pineapples, fruit trees, and cattle was part of the school's curriculum.

There was also a nine-hole golf course, laid out by the teachers and kept in order by the Moro students. Lately, however, no one had been playing on it. There were two good reasons for this. One was a multitude of cobras, often rearing their ugly, hooded heads out of the holes just as a player was about to putt. According to the green's rules, it was considered a hole played if, in the circumstances, the player chose to pick up the ball.

Actually, cobras on golf courses are nothing unusual in these latitudes. On a golf course in Zamboanga I once read a sign: "Cobras—Beware! Do not pick your balls out of cups—let the caddy do it!"

The other menace, however, proved much more formidable. The school's cattle herd was lorded over by an imported Indian bull, which for some inexplicable reason suddenly changed from a mild and lovable animal into a ferocious beast, hating the sight of man. Only one Moro herdsman was capable of handling him, and even him the bull once picked up on his horns and tossed into a ditch, luckily without breaking any of the man's bones or bruising him too badly. At first it was decided that the bull was to be shot, but his blood was considered so valuable and his price had been so high that ultimately his life was spared.

I had not been acquainted with this ferocious danger, when one Sunday morning I decided to try a few holes of golf. No one of the faculty cared to join me. When I asked a Moro youngster to caddy for me, he shook his head in horrified refusal. So I had to carry my own bag.

I was happily practising shots and had already shooed away a couple of snakes, when suddenly I heard a crashing and banging as of a steam tractor breaking through the underbrush.

The next instant I saw him. The bull came charging, head down, tail up, his hind legs now and then violently kicking in the air, whether from pure joy of living or plain hatred of man, I gave myself no time to reflect. I turned to flee for safety—but there was no tree to climb, no fence to jump—just an open field for the bull and me to play on.

I was petrified. Lot's wife couldn't have done better. I just stood there, not even praying, nor even seeing my sinful past parade before me. And then it happened. The bull made one ferocious high jump, came down on all fours, head lowered—and stood stock still.

Now, what the——?

He still stood there, only a few yards from me. By now, I had come to my senses and realized that something extraordinary had happened to this bull to cause his strange and unbull-like behaviour. I soon saw the reason. His right horn was cracked at its base near the skull and a reddish-brown fluid was oozing out of the wound.

The beast was begging for help for his headache. I felt like approaching him, but I respectfully refrained from doing so. I did not know him well enough.

That afternoon I told my story to the principal. By night-fall, the bull was lassoed, thrown by half a dozen men, the horn was removed, his wound administered to, and everybody took pains to remark how docilely the beast had submitted to the operation. What this poor animal must have gone through with hundreds of maggots nestling in the wound, more than explained his bad temper.

In a short time the bull was cured. I didn't see him until another Sunday, when again I went to play golf. I still couldn't get a caddy and once again I had to carry my clubs.

There came the bull again. He was full of *joie de vivre* and came straight for me. Now what? He came jumping and zig-zagging like a Spring-struck calf—and ten yards from me he lay gently down on the ground and said, "Moo."

Now you just stay there, I thought, until I get out of this place.

"Moo," the bull insisted, and shook his one-horned head.

He looked at me so dolefully that I took courage and went close to him.

So I scratched his head, and very softly he whispered, "Moo."

I had a banana in my pocket and he ate it.

Well, after a while, I continued my solitary game, and lo and behold, the beast was following me as I tramped along from hole to hole.

The next day, I saw him there again, and we had our little conversation. I scratched his ear, gave him a banana and he followed me around.

So it continued day after day, only—the bull was getting tee-wise. He soon learned that between the holes I didn't have time to scratch his ear, so he walked ahead of me, lowered his big carcass beside the next hole while waiting for me to catch up, and repeated this performance at all eight holes. Then, the game over, we parted with a soft " so-long ' moo ' " for the day.

From now on, every Moro boy wanted to caddy for me. But why should I let them ? Why pay money ? Every morning the bull was waiting for me by the first tee. I hung my golf bag on his ear, gave him his banana, pulled out my club—and told him to wait at number two hole.

The best caddy I ever had—never cost me a penny.

* * *

HERE WE GO QUIETLY NUTS IN MAY

Do you hanker for April showers,
Or a rarefied day in June ?
Give me a grade-A May day,
And please deliver it soon.

I am weary of branches naked,
Creaking like lovelorn cats ;
The earth underfoot half bakèd,
And the sun overhead ersatz.

Send me a balmy zephyr
To play me a rigadoon,
And I'll gulp of my grade-A May day
Till my hiccups hammer the moon.

OGDEN NASH, *Good Intentions*

MAJOR PLEASURES

And trivial delights, to beguile the heart or pique the fancy

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night :

My desire and thy desire
Twining to a tongue of fire,
Leaping live, and laughing higher ;
Thro' the everlasting strife
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
Hath the secret of the sun.

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life, and sweet is breath :

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay
In the dawning of the day.

ROBERT BRIDGES, 1844-1930

Sweet to Follow

The last branch of our fashion into which the close observation of nature has been introduced, is our dessert. Jellies, biscuits, sugar-plums, and creams, have long given way to harlequins, gondoliers, Turks, Chinese, and shepherdesses of Saxon china. But these, unconnected, and only seeming to wander among groves of curled paper and silk flowers, were soon discovered to be too insipid and unmeaning. By degrees meadows of cattle of the same brittle materials spread themselves over the table: cottages rose in sugar, and temples in barley-sugar; pigmies, Neptunes, in cars of cockle shells, triumphed over oceans of looking-glass or seas of silver tissue. Women of the first quality came home from Chevenix's laden with dolls and babies, not for their children, but

for their housekeeper. At last even these puerile puppet-shows are sinking into disuse, and more manly ways of concluding our repasts are established. Gigantic figures succeed to pigmies; and it is known that a celebrated confectioner (Lord Albermarle's) complained that, after having prepared a middle dish of gods and goddesses eighteen feet high, his lord would not cause the ceiling of his parlour to be demolished to facilitate their entry.

HORACE WALPOLE, 1717-1797, *quoted by Lord Orford*

Pedlar's Song

Lawne as white as driven Snow,
Cypresse blacke as ere was Crow,
Cloves as sweete as Damaske Roses,
Maskes for faces, and for noses,
Bugle-bracelet, Necke-lace Amber,
Perfume for a Ladies Chamber :
Golden Quoifes, and Stomachers
For my Lads, to give their deers :
Pins, and peaking-stickes of steele :
What Maids lacke from head to heele :
Come buy of me, come : come buy, come buy,
Buy Lads, or else your Lasses cry : Come buy.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Mines or Serpents

Mrs. Miniver herself, when buying fireworks, was apt to be led away by fantastic titles; she would order Humming Spiders, Witches' Cauldrons, Mines with Serpents, Bouquets of Gerbes, and Devils among the Tailors, largely in order to see what they were like. But Clem knew that with fireworks, as with cocktails, the sober, familiar names usually produced the most interesting results. He laid out a certain amount on Roman Candles, Catherine-wheels, and Toubillions, but for the most part he rightly concentrated on rockets.

JAN STRUTHER, *Mrs. Miniver*

Interlude

Oh! there is an organ playing in the street—a waltz too! I must leave off to listen. They are playing a waltz which I have heard ten thousand times at the balls in London, between 1812 and 1815. Music is a strange thing.

LORD BYRON, *Diary, February 2, 1821*

Nth Degree

Often times Archimedes' servants got him against his will to the bathes, to washe and annoynt him : and yet being there he would ever be drawing out of the Geometricall figures, even in the very imbers of the chimney. And while they were annointing him with oyles and swete savors, with his fingers he did draw lines upon his naked body : so far was he taken from himself, and brought into an extasy or trauns, with the delite he had in the study of Geometry . . .

PLUTARCH, *Life of Marcellus, c.* 100,
Translated by Sir Thomas North, 1579

Valentine

This evening my wife did with great pleasure shew me her stock of jewels, encreased by the ring she hath made lately as my Valentine's gift this year, a Turky stone set with diamonds: and with this and what she had, she reckons that she hath above £150 worth of jewels, of one kind or other; and I am glad of it, for it is fit the wretch should have something to content herself with.

SAMUEL PEPYS, *Diary, February* 24, 1668

Sweets to the Sweet

How can I promise violets, drunken in wine
For your amusement,
How can I powder your blue cotton dress
With splinters of emerald,
How can I sing your songs of the amber pear,
Or pour for the finger tips of your white fingers
Mingled scents in a rose agate bowl?

From the Chinese of F. WING, 19*th Century,*
Translated by E. POWYS MATHERS

O Death . . .

Because great eyes in *Turkey* are esteemed an excellencie, therefore *Mahomet*, well knowing their desire, promiseth them in his Paradise, wenches with great eyes like saucers.

JOHN BULWER, *Anthropometamorphosis,*
or The Artificial Changeling, 1650

EDNA'S FRUIT HAT

For ten years she had waited for this moment

by JOHN PUDNEY

"WHAT a relief for Edna," they said. "But she won't know herself. She's always been so devoted to Mother. She must feel that she's starting life again—and at her age!"

"But we've all done our best for Mother, come to that."

They arrived, the relatives; their mourning, smelling of moth-balls from its long preparedness; their black, glossy in the sun; their voices satisfactory as the steady afternoon.

Edna, glancing over her shoulder to make sure all the blinds were down, advanced across the weedy drive. Everyone had known that this would happen: everyone had been prepared. Edna's sad demeanour was so rehearsed that she could hardly believe that the day was the great day, Mother a handsome corpse in the chintz bedroom, and the house filled with the decent inactivity of death. Edna had been prepared for over ten years: that was why they said that it was a relief.

There was not much money involved. There were the railway shares: but the last ten years had made inroads upon capital and everyone agreed that there could not be much left.

There was some property: but it was indifferent stuff, a source of continual worry, a declining asset. Working-class property is not what it was. It needs money spent on it, now and then, if it is old: and people on the dole are such bad payers.

Hardly a year passed without Mother having a notice served on her to carry out some repair to keep the place habitable: and yet the tenants would complain about bugs and high rents, leaving Mother with such an irregular income that Edna had had to manage with one maid in spite of all the stairs.

Edna rubbed her thin hands, welcoming the relatives. It was a pity there were so many, as the small amount of money was to be divided amongst all of them. The property, however, she had always understood would be hers—the reward of her companionship of Mother. All the even numbers from twenty-eight to sixty-eight of Prospect Place, were her reward.

"She must feel she's starting life again," they said.

They crowded round the tea table, bringing black into the red

dining room, where Mother had enjoyed her roast beef and heavy jokes. Their eyes valued the silver teapot, the spoons, the cutlery and the best tea service. It was a good tea ; and, after all, starvation was no part of mourning for the dead. Comfort was to be found in food, even as consolation in heirlooms.

" Well, Edna, I suppose you'll have a sale—of the odd stuff that's not wanted."

" Yes ; a sale would be best." She spoke flatly, not betraying the tremor she felt at the thought of the sale. To be able to sell off the birdcages, the croquet sets, the mementos of Burma, the basket-work furniture, the useless kitchen utensils, was a cherished dream.

The huge array of neatly arranged junk in the upper rooms had tormented her these twenty years.

She had suggested selling some of it once in an orgy of spring-cleaning, but Mother promptly had had one of her attacks and begged her never to mention it again.

The suggestion of a sale, decorously made in the shaded dining-room, sent a shock of joy through her ; and it took her lifetime's experience of self-control to prevent her hand trembling with the plate of thin bread and butter.

" Poor Edna. You will have to be brave ; it is not going to be easy." A sticky warm hand closed on hers.

" I shall manage."

" Oh ! but we'll all help. We can't leave you to manage all this by yourself."

" Besides, Edna, there's the house. Much too big ; but dear Mother always clung to it because it was Father's. We shall have to make arrangements to sell the house, Edna."

" I suppose we shall." She rose, unable to sit there at the head of the table, concealing from them her emotions. Her voice was unsteady, the lines round her mouth wavered. She left them, gliding into the yellow sunlight of the hall.

" We shall have to keep an eye on Edna. She knows nothing of life ; and the strain is telling on her."

" She's sure to do something mad in her grief . . ."

" But I suppose she is provided for ? "

" Well provided for. She will be able to settle down quietly in a small room somewhere."

" Silly of her to take on about the house."

" Absurd. It's clear we shall have to stay on and see this through, to protect our own interests, if nothing else."

Complacent with scones and home-made strawberry jam, with the feeling that they were doing the right thing, and with the prospect of something for nothing when the estate was wound up, they were charitable about Edna, because she had given her life for Mother,

and Mother was a 15-stone corpse upstairs. Very soon the talk drifted to the money and the possessions. While they chatted sombrely they fixed their eyes upon the silver teapot which Edna had hurriedly put down.

Edna leant against the umbrella stand in the bright hall and the sun lighted upon her bones. Unheard, laughter shook her until she was weak at the knees. Selling the tall angular house, with its chocolate paint and its dim meaningless corners, was no new idea to her. More than once she had caught herself looking wistfully at estate agents' boards offering the unlovely husks of other respectable houses.

Now it was about to happen. Would she be able to fold her hands, so used to tending its ungainly interior, and watch them dispose of the house, without the relief of giddy applauding laughter ? Would she contain herself, with joy like the summer warmth upon her bones ?

She listened to the voices in the dining room and composed herself. It was her moment of liberation, but control was still essential.

" There, there, Edna," they said. " We've decided everything for you. Cousin Sid will have everything valued."

" Everything valued ? "

" Yes ; the goods and chattels that we don't want."

Goods and chattels, that was good. Wearily she looked at them and wondered at their furtive eyes coveting the valuables.

Her own treasure, which she had inherited, winked and glowed inside her like something living, whiter than silver, ruddier than gold. It mocked their anxiety and made her lower her eyes. It was best not to say much, but to sit there folding one's hands, waiting for tea to finish. Black did not suit her faded red hair ; it made her features pasty, too, and accentuated her tallness.

She said she would go for a stroll that evening while they were busy with the details of tomorrow's Will-reading and funeral. It would give them a chance to have a good look round.

In Mrs. Gussett's eyes Edna was a lady. Not only had she class, but she had that rare gentleness and ease of bearing which made Mrs. Gussett declare that she could tell her a mile off. Years of business association and Mrs. Gussett's going up in the world had ripened their acquaintance. Some people could never forget that Mrs. Gussett had worked in the laundry with her own hands while it was still a small business : Edna never showed that she was aware of the fact. When Gussett became a J.P. and moved from the house in front of the laundry to " The Towers," Edna had never talked about the new rich, like some people : and that alone justified all that Mrs. Gussett said about her.

"What a time you've been having," said Mrs. Gussett. "But I suppose it's all for the best—though you won't let them relations do the dirty on you, will you?"

Edna smiled. "There's nothing they can do, Mrs. Gussett. They can't take away from me what I possess within me."

"You're not going religious, my dear?"

"Oh, no! Not religious, Mrs. Gussett, though I hope I remain a good churchwoman . . ." Being with Mrs. Gussett calmed her. The touch of veneration and protection steadied her nerve. "And I might add," she said, "that I never felt so well in my life."

"Will there be much for you?"

Edna started. "Much? Well, I haven't thought. Mother used to say that I should have the houses in Prospect Place. They're very poor, you know, but they bring in enough to live on."

"You'll have to start thinking about that—soon as the Will's read. Property isn't all money for jam these days."

"But . . ." Edna checked herself. It was difficult to say what was in her mind, even to Mrs. Gussett. It was difficult to find words to describe the vast inconsequence of houses in Prospect Place in their relation to the joy that had conquered her.

"I should watch your step if I was you," said Mrs. Gussett earnestly. "You're going to find a big difference."

Edna strolled back. The house was full of ghosts. The relatives, unable to restrain their curiosity and eagerness for booty, reverently scuttled about behind the closed blinds. The door of Mother's room had been locked, but they expressed a sudden desire to see her again before going to bed, and accordingly Edna unlocked the door and let them in.

They took rather a long time looking at Mother. When they came out Edna had gone to bed.

"She's taking it very badly, poor girl."

"But she must have known it would happen sooner or later. There's no need for her to be quite so inconsolable, do you think?"

"Well my dear, whether it's grief or whether it's just rudeness she is certainly no credit to dear Mother's memory, going out and paying visits and treating us as if we were almost strangers. We really must keep an eye on her at the funeral tomorrow."

About an hour before the mutes came, the Will was read. They sat round the dining room table, one eye on Edna and one on the lawyer. It began well. The money to be divided. The slum property to Edna. The effects to be divided or sold. Everyone nodded. This was just. Edna would be kept alive by the slum, like many another maiden lady; and they would acquire a benefit without responsibility.

There was more to come, however. Mother, with her fondness

for underdone beef and breezy unpleasantness, was to have the last word. Edna had been a good girl: she had been made aware of her sense of duty: she had been willing, though unenterprising. Mother admired enterprise.

Therefore, said the Will, if Edna was *earning* five pounds a week within a month of the funeral she was to take possession of the silver teapot, the fine cutlery, and all the plate and jewellery, which, as Fanny said afterwards, was worth the whole estate put together.

Edna, grey and motionless with the rest of them, listened to the ponderous sardonic joke which was Mother's last. The tears danced in her eyes with suppressed laughter when she saw the half-smiles they could not suppress, their seemly faint plaudits of Mother's pleasantry.

She bowed her head. Work, real work separate from duty, from the burdensome never-ending duty of home.

All her life she had longed to plunge her hands and mind into something. Something useful, something constructive. She had envied Mrs. Gussett's early days in the laundry. She envied Mrs. Gussett's preoccupation now with worldly pursuits paying a dividend, but she herself desired to use her hands, liberating them from the tyrannical trifles of Mother's house.

Now, for the reward of the teapot and other valuables, she was invited to go and earn money. The excitement of such a suggestion shut out the polite questioning of the lawyer, the reassuring whispers that Edna would never learn to earn five pounds a week, the amused surprise at Mother's little joke.

How could it be done? How could she bring her tall, gaunt body, her excited freshly-articulating mind, her faded red hair and her broad splay feet to earn a living? She had dreamed of keeping a tearoom, a knitwear shop, a poultry farm, a typewriting bureau. Yet they needed experience and seemed out of the question.

All her joyous energy fizzed up, and yet she had not the confidence to make a choice. She wanted to choose slowly, quietly, during the infinite sunny days which were to come: but the thought of the teapot and the valuables, the furtive and discreet valuations in the eyes of the relatives plagued her.

"We are keeping an eye on Edna," they told the lawyer. "We think she's odd."

"She has always seemed very businesslike to me," he said. "She managed the estate when the old lady was alive; and I should not be surprised to see her show a will of her own, now she is—er unattached."

A will of her own! That was the danger. With Mother there to curb her, she had had her duty and no more. Now it was evident, by her avoidance of company and by her unfathomable manner,

that she might do something quite on her own ; and, with all the valuables involved, she would have to be watched.

The undertaker was already in the house ; and the procession was due to start in a quarter of an hour's time. Upstairs the ladies dressed in the outdoor clothes they had had made for the occasion ; downstairs the gentlemen brushed their hats and discussed the undertaker's bill.

When Edna came down they were all assembled, adjusting one another for the last time, and looking in the long mirror in the drawing-room. They were as black as crows.

" Why, Edna, you're not going to wear that fruit hat ! "

" Surely not at Mother's funeral ! "

" We're all in full mourning . . ."

" Haven't you a black one, Edna ? "

" Yes," she said with a tight hard look, as if she were holding something back. " I think I have."

" If there was any difficulty you need only have said. Cousin Sid knows of a place where hats can be dyed in an hour or so."

" There was no difficulty. I prefer this one."

It was mauve, this fruit hat of Edna's, of a pattern rare in these days—more is the pity—a pattern built rather than put together, constructed rather than hazarded.

Its shiny straw rose to a noble crown, smooth and regular as a bowler ; but its glory was its brim, wide and strong enough to bear its adornment without strain, shapely enough, moreover, to show it to advantage, to the admiration of beholders and pride of the wearer.

The fruit was handsome stuff, boldly conceived, and executed to such a perfection of sheen and liveliness as to make every mouth water. It was of the cherry family ; but what a celestial cherry. Black, purple, crimson, and yellow, it clicked and danced against a garnishing of grass, leaves and poppy buds as the hat moved through the air.

Here was a gaiety unknown to the black hats of the relatives, hats of felt, of velvet, of feathers, of fur. The fruit hat was eternally spring-like, conveying the promise of summer in every one of its buds, its ripening fruit, and its mellowing grass blades. It was a comely hat, a poetical hat, a timeless hat, full of meaning, of virtue, of plenty.

Edna looked well in it.

Not only did its colour lighten the dolour in which her self-control held her fast, but it added a spiritual touch to the gathering of mourners.

" We all have preferences in hats, Edna, but this is hardly the time to show them."

"And with Mother not yet in her grave. Really, Edna, I'm a little surprised."

"I'm sorry, you see, Edna, but you may not realize, you've lived such a sheltered life. A fruit hat is not . . ."

"I shall wear this hat." She said it commandingly. The fruit hat coolly nestling upon her faded red hair gave her courage. A kind of goodness went through her ; she could face their indignation without fear of showing her joy. She was mistress of herself now. She stamped her foot, and the fruit tittered merrily.

"But Edna, this is an outrage."

"Grief at losing Mother has turned her mind."

"Callousness, you mean. Poor Mother . . ."

Handkerchiefs were brought out. Though the undertaker discreetly beckoned at the door, the relatives huddled round Edna.

"I appeal to you, Edna, take off that fruit hat. It's upsetting everyone."

"It will disgrace all of us."

"Think of Mother, Edna. She remembered you. She has left you all those houses in Prospect Place."

Edna moved to the door with dignity. "I think it's time to start. I shall travel in the first carriage."

They followed. They had lost.

"We ought to have kept an eye on her."

"For our own sakes as much as hers, we must get her off quietly to a furnished room at Bournemouth or some nice place . . ."

"She might be crazy enough to get herself a job ; and that stuff is absolutely wasted on her."

"Mother never meant her to have it."

"Well, she's not got a job yet, and if she starts flaunting herself like this in finery when she should be in mourning, she's less likely than ever . . ."

"It's not the hat so much—though that is bad enough—it's that look she gave us."

That look. Edna felt it too. She was majestic in that moment. All the power of her suppressed vitality had been in it. The hat had become part of her, another sense, an added character, a living addition to her stature.

There was quite a crowd at the funeral. It was early closing day for one thing ; and then Mother's part in collecting money for local charities had brought, in time, the reputation for being a good old lady devoted to charitable works.

The relatives stood a little apart from Edna to demonstrate their implicit disapproval of the fruit hat, which had aroused the curiosity of everyone.

"She would never have dared to do it if the old lady had been alive," said the onlookers.

"Perhaps she doesn't know she's got it on."

"Of course she knows! Look at the way she's wearing it. I've never seen Miss Edna look so proud."

They lowered Mother's corpse; and Edna listened to the birds. Never had they sung so beautifully as on this early summer afternoon. She was at one with them, and would have sung, too, had it not been for the eyes of the relatives pricking her back like darts, and the respectful eyes of the crowd come to see the last of Mother.

She was at one with nature, too, with the budding roses and the graveyard grass, with the lusty smell of new-cut turf and the light wind which blew out the feathery elms. On a neighbouring tombstone stood a thrush, yellow-throated and loud. She caught his eye, and the onlookers were sorry for her, standing looking at the thrush, the symbol of nature living on amidst death.

But the thrush, well-groomed and greedy, saw no symbolism.

No sooner was the coffin grounded, than he was up on the brim of Edna's hat, his beak an inch from a purple cherry, his tail erect for all to see.

The clergyman faltered, his eye fixed on the bird, his mind taken up with the unusual spectacle. There was a rustling, nudging sound from the crowd at this moment when one would have expected reverent silence. The relatives kept glancing quickly and then looking away over the trees.

"How can she stand there!" someone whispered. "This is too horrible."

"Cousin Sid ought to tell her and ask her to move."

"She knows. She was looking at it when it came."

She knew; but she was happy, she was one with nature. She was possessed with a kind of goodness.

Again the clergyman faltered, this time without recovery. Everybody gaped at Edna's hat. The thrush was eating the fruit with deliberate enjoyment. After he had eaten several, Edna indulgently murmured, "That's enough now," and he flew away.

Then it was noticed that several of the hat's poppies were coming out in the sun, blue ones as well as red, that the grass was waving in the breeze, and that a snail was ambling across the red and white leaves.

How they finished off the burial of Mother nobody knew, with the clergyman saying things in the wrong order, the mutes clumsy in their preoccupation, and the crowd openly concerned with Edna's hat.

Edna was neither embarrassed nor distressed. She took it for granted. All day, she thought, I have felt goodness rising through

my head. That must have been what made me wear the hat.

"I feel quite well," she said afterwards.

"But you made a public exhibition of us," they said.

"I wasn't aware that anyone was looking at you."

"But the family, Edna! You made a public disgrace of Mother's funeral."

"It was a perfectly normal funeral. Mother was buried."

"But you can't have birds in your hat. Fruit is bad enough."

"Cousin Sid has chickens on his roof in Kensington. Why shouldn't I have an occasional bird in my hat?"

"But, Edna, how do you grow the stuff?"

"It's just goodness going up through my hair. I couldn't keep it in any longer. I think it began when they were lowering the coffin." She spoke casually, but she cowed them.

"We must keep this to ourselves, at all costs." That evening the mourners forgot possessions to discuss Edna's hat. Twice young men called to inquire if it was true that there had been an incident at the funeral. Fortunately, Edna had gone out to visit Mrs. Gussett and an emphatic denial could be given. "That it will get about is absolutely certain even if we deny it. It will be very damaging to all of us."

"She's bewitched. There's probably something evil at the bottom of her. Couldn't Cousin Sid ring up one of those occult people?"

They fretted and sweated and tried to argue each other out of it. They arrived at no explanation. Edna seemed to accept it as a matter of course. Mother had made her last joke when she had put the conditions in the Will.

Not even her bucolic sense of humour, always such a trial, could have contrived the miraculous growth of Edna's hat. No, it was a freak of nature, but one which involved all of them, as it reflected upon their integrity, their respectability, and their public appearance. Some explanation would have to be given.

"Another young man from the *Daily Light* has called, and Cousin Sid says he won't go away. He says he's standing there with a man with a camera."

"What would Mother have said . . ."

"That is not the point. We have our own position to consider. We mustn't let them think *it* runs in the family."

"Well then, Cousin Sid can tell them what she says, that it's goodness coming up through her . . ."

"Nobody's going to believe that. And it's a terrible thing to say, the day you've buried Mother."

They waited for Edna to come back, and the camera-man waited. They lifted a corner of the blind, and a shiver went through

them when they saw the gentlemen of the Press, like a garrison round the house.

Several of them put on their hats then, to be ready for any emergency. Sharp words were spoken as to the advisability of allowing Edna to be interviewed.

Mother's possessions were forgotten; reputation, most valuable of all, was in jeopardy. Several of them packed their bags: it would not do to take too many risks trying to save Edna from her enjoyment of her own situation. "Let her help herself," they said, "if she hasn't the decency to stand in with us and explain herself."

Tension grew. More reporters arrived, a policeman, and a few curious neighbours. "It's enough to make Mother turn in her grave," they kept saying when the silence irked them. They stood up, after a time. They stood by their luggage; for the inactivity and suspense unnerved them.

They stood by the door and sent Cousin Sid to the window to watch round the corner of the blind. The house, relieved of Mother's corpse, was even more sombre.

As they waited, they could hear the stairs creaking and the maid in a distant pantry preparing tea. Edna would be back for tea; and afterwards they were to have gone through the rooms, as everyone had agreed that it would be easier to take away small articles immediately.

Cousin Sid was to have made arrangements with Edna about going into furnished rooms; and then he had to explain his scheme about placing the houses in the hands of a friend of his who, for only a small percentage, would collect the rents and see that there was no nonsense about repairs. Edna was to have been made comfortable.

Now they waited, watching Cousin Sid at the window; and when he said, "Here she is!" they tiptoed across the room. They let the blind up so that they could all see.

Edna was surrounded by reporters. Only the fruit hat was visible. The group slowly moved towards the house. What was Edna saying to them? What would they say about Edna. What would the world think of the family now? A shudder went through the mourners.

"This is infamous."

"But we can't stop it. We can't do anything."

"We can keep clear, though . . ."

"What, with Mother hardly cold in her grave?"

"There's the back door."

"So there is . . ."

The maid, who had been filling the silver teapot, put it down with a clatter when she saw the black-clad, hurrying relatives.

Unsteadily they passed through the back door and scrambled between the evergreens to the tradesmen's entrance. They carried their luggage and they were complaining in whispers. The maid was glad to see them go. Though she didn't mind a death in the house, relatives were troublesome. She finished filling the teapot and went to tell Miss Edna.

Edna was flushed, and a little breathless. She nodded happily on hearing that they had gone. All constraint left her: and she invited the newspapermen to come in and have tea. They pulled up the blinds and enjoyed tea from the silver pot. Edna beamed, she tingled all over with goodness.

For ten years she had waited for this moment, to be mistress of the house that had imprisoned her, to feel her own life in the room, individual and dominant. The relatives had fled; in a few weeks the rooms would be cleared. She would be alone: and the summer would warm her bones.

"The goodness is bursting out of me," she had said to Mrs. Gussett. "Ought I to tell people? They will wonder about my hat, you see."

"Your hat is your own," Mrs. Gussett had said in her practical way. "Your life is your own. It's no business of other people, dear, least of all those serpents—don't think I mean it ill—your relatives. I never heard of anybody growing fruit and vegetables like this, and I asked Gussett and he hadn't either; but since it's happened to you I'd take it as if you'd meant it to happen. And, come to that, Gussett says there might be an honest penny in it, if you were inclined."

"A job?" she had said quickly.

"Of course. It would be a rare attraction in an exhibition, or say, at a flower show; or one of the big London stores might take you up. Gussett generally knows what's what when it comes to business."

So Mother's little joke, her last sneer, might yet be in vain! Gripping the silver teapot Edna put it to the newspapermen.

"I was wondering," she said, "if it would lead to a job."

They said it would, and ate her scones and strawberry jam the quicker, their eyes on the fruit hat.

Edna, for the first time in her life, was happy under those glances. She had always thought that one day life would race through her like this. She sighed with happiness and agreed willingly to wear the fruit hat in bed, in case it should cease growing and wither.

The next day she was in all the newspapers; and the relatives nearly died of shame when they read about the funeral and how she had said she felt the goodness going up through her hair. That

day she signed contracts with a film company, a Sunday newspaper, and a London store.

She agreed to broadcast in "In Town Tonight" on the next Saturday, to become a vice-president of a Wild Life Society, and to open a flower show. Mr. and Mrs. Gussett guided her, and tore up the begging letters; and the lawyer kept ringing up to congratulate her on so swiftly fulfilling the terms of the legacy.

There was nation-wide excitement about Edna.

She took it calmly, saying she had always known something would happen when Mother died. Nothing else would happen, she said, now this had happened; and for a full year nothing did.

Then a lady who had flown upside down to America took her place in the London store, wrote her autobiography in the Sunday papers and broadcast in "In Town Tonight": and Edna took off the fruit hat because she said it tired her.

She still leads a wholesome, industrious life, though, keeping her houses so well that Cousin Sid says she is too eccentric to own property. Her goodness is regulated into channels now where it is less perceptible, though probably just as potent.

Certain people, influenced perhaps by her relatives, sometimes claim that it never happened, that it was a put-up job to obtain a silver teapot and other effects; but Edna is proof against uncharitable words. She says that it was just the sort of thing she had expected, though she could hardly have been expected to go on doing it. Wearing a fruit hat can be very tiring.

* * *

REMAUSS

While he was visiting New York, a well known writer had his wallet stolen in the subway. Inquiries were made in appropriate quarters, but without success.

The following morning he received this letter, written in an unformed and almost illegible hand:

"*Sir, I stoal youre munny. Remauss is noring me, so I send sum of it back to you. Wen it nors again I will send sum more.*"

THE OUTLAW OF CEDAR FOREST

The new warden had a mouth like a mink trap and the eye of a turtle

by EDMUND WARE

UP north around Mopang, in the little smoky cabins, they tell by lamplight the story of the origin of Thomas Jefferson Coongate's hatred for game wardens, one and all. The one-eyed poacher himself swears that the story is true, which, of course, is a certificate of nothing. You are likely to hear the tale recounted during deer season, and there are apologies to young Tom Corn, the current game warden, whose dealings with Uncle Jeff, though diffident, are respectable.

Concerning that other warden, whose name shall be Gideon Andrews, and whose dismal memory strikes fire from Jeff Coongate's one eye, there are no apologies. Warden Gid Andrews was a mistake which the state has long since rectified—except for his influence on the one-eyed poacher. Still, many people believe that the imperious old woodsman was born clutching a jack light, and left school as soon as he had learned to read the labels on whisky bottles. Gid Andrews just didn't help matters any to speak of.

The story begins in Sim Pease's store in the hamlet of Privilege on an afternoon in October an undetermined number of years ago. There you saw the cloud-fat Sim standing before his shelves, which were weighed with all manner of provisions and implements, from anvils to nipples, and from abutment spikes to black tea.

On this afternoon there was a very heavy suspense. The new game warden had just arrived in town—and so had Thomas Jefferson Coongate, who had declared his intention of meeting the impostor face to face. The warden's name was Gideon Andrews, and his reputation was long and sharp. Jeff Coongate himself had a reputation, and had publicly stated his willingness to defend and enhance it.

So now, as a tall, stony-faced man entered the store, the one-eyed poacher stood erect, his eye gleaming a baleful blue. As always, the old outlaw felt a grave responsibility to his audience, and he went to work like a seasoned trouper. The new warden, however, was a dour and sinister individual with a mouth like a mink trap and the eye of a turtle. His presence sent a chill of

pessimism throughout the little store. But Uncle Jeff, despite his vague misgivings, fired the opening shot.

"You're this fellow Gideon Andrews, ain't you? The new game warden?"

The warden acknowledged the challenge with a sour expression.

"Got quite a bad name, ain't you?" offered the one-eyed poacher.

"That's right."

"I hear tell how you'd arrest your own brother."

"I'm an only child."

"Then you'd arrest your own mother," pursued Uncle Jeff.

"She's dead."

"What'd she die of?"

"Disappointment," the warden said, stonily.

The one-eyed poacher had the feeling that he had come off number two man in the initial skirmish. Roscoe Carrion, the trapper, tittered from his perch on the dry-goods counter. Uncle Jeff, infuriated, attacked once more.

"Are you married?"

"Yes," said the warden.

It seemed incredible to Jeff Coongate that a woman might conceivably love Gideon Andrews. He stated his disbelief. The warden was unperturbed, his eyes as warm and appealing as the kind of marble they use for gravestones.

"Any children?" inquired the one-eyed poacher.

"Yes."

Uncle Jeff said he liked children, and was grieved that any of them should be blessed with such a parent as Gid Andrews appeared to be. He added that he hoped the offspring were living with relatives, where their father's influence could not distort their characters.

"We are moving into the old Weatherbee house next Friday," replied the warden, coldly. Then he added with heavy irony: "In case you want to pay us a call."

"Friday's the wrong day of the week," said the one-eyed poacher.

"Meaning?"

"Meaning," said the old poacher, driven to recklessness, "that I don't eat fish—and that by Monday, I will kill a deer in your district, and eat it, or else peddle it out."

"All right, Jeff Coongate. And by Tuesday you'll be in jail."

"You got to catch me first."

"Catching men like you is what I love."

Now, controlling his wrath, the outlaw of the forest drew himself up, and bowed with peculiar hauteur. While the awed listeners watched, he turned loftily to Sim Pease, gesturing with

his great hands, and saying: "Sim, I'll have a box of forty-five seventy's, some salt pork, some batteries for my jack light, an' a bottle of Hernando's Fiery Dagger Rum—no, make it a jug."

The warden, smiling like death, turned slowly and left the store. When he had disappeared, Sim Pease said: "Jeff, you shouldn't of talked that-a-way. That Gid Andrews has got a bad eye."

"So have I!" replied the one-eyed poacher.

"You can't win," said Sim. "He'll get you, an' he ain't fussy just how he does it."

"I made my boast, an' I aim to carry it out."

The old woodsman gathered his purchases, charged them to his absentee friend, Zack Bourne, who, he said, owed him eleven dollars, and departed, sauntering proudly into the blue, chill sunlight of fall. Watching the gaunt figure, one would not have guessed that he realized how dangerously he had overplayed his hand. He remembered the merciless eye of the man he had challenged. And he longed for companionship on his boasted expedition.

At the lower end of the hamlet, he met Jumbo Tethergood.

"Jumbo," he said, in a confidential tone, "I know where there's a handsome buck, an' I aim to git him before the season opens."

"Can I come, Jeff? I'm hungry for wild meat."

Even in his increasing alarm, the one-eyed poacher could not refrain from savouring the drama of his plight. Taking a thoughtful pull from the jug of Hernando's, he shook his head.

"Jumbo," he said, "I've loved you since you was a little boy. So I ain't got the heart to take you with me when I git that buck. It's a dangerous thing, Jumbo. Your children, and Tessie would—"

"What they got to do with it? I got a right to go, ain't I?"

"Yes, yes, that's a fact. Jest wanted to warn you first. I told the new game warden I was goin' to kill a buck by Monday."

Jumbo Tethergood averted his eyes. He shuffled his feet. He had heard of the new scourge.

"Well, Jeff, I'd sure like to go with you. I ain't afeared of no new warden. I'd tell it to his face, too. But, fact is, I got to go to Mopang to buy hay. I jest remembered this minute."

At the public landing on the dark, forbidding lake, Jeff got his canoe and loaded it. He was about to shove off, when Zack Bourne appeared. These two old woodsmen were lifelong comrades, and at sight of Jeff, Zack whooped with joy. He smote his friend upon the back, causing a cloud of dust to arise. "Why, Jeff, you old polecat! I ain't seen you in weeks."

Uncle Jeff stood with eyes downcast, making no response. Zack stared. He was rebuffed and hurt. "What ails you? Where you goin'?"

"Goin' to kill one more deer."

"You talk like it was your last."

"Is—prob'ly."

Zack laughed.

"That sure is good. Your last! Wait'll I tell Stumpy Coldwillow, an' them that knows you. And—say! I think I'll go with you. I told Sarah I mightn't be back tonight."

"No, Zack," intoned old Jeff, blinking away a dampness in his eye, "I want to be alone."

"You want to be *alone!* In your own *company?* Do you like to suffer?"

"No, Zack. It's just that you always been like a brother to me. I don't want no harm to come to you. I aim to make the supreme sacrifice, alone. This hunt is too dangerous."

"What in hell you talkin' about? Too dangerous! How about when we chloroformed them beaver on Sabio Deadwater? How about the time we doubled on the Little Mopang Trail, with a hind quarter of moose."

Thomas Jefferson Coongate smiled benignly on the bewildered and angry Zack. There was a sad, lost look in the old poacher's eye as he informed his friend of the deadly news. "You see, Zack, I told this here new warden, this Gid Andrews, that I'm goin' to kill a piece of meat in his district by Monday."

"What!"

Uncle Jeff nodded solemnly.

"Jeff!" croaked Zack. "You mean to say you—why, don't you *know* about this Andrews man?"

"Uh-huh."

"He killed two men down in Jackpine County. Did you know that?"

"It was three men," corrected Uncle Jeff, who had heard nothing of the deed hitherto, "an' he wounded a small boy."

Zack Bourne licked his lips and stared off across the lake. Beads of sweat gathered under his hat. "Well," he said, limply, "I had really ought to git back uplake to Sarah tonight. I hadn't ought to leave her alone."

"No," said the one-eyed poacher, settling in the stern of his canoe and taking his paddle, "an tell Sarah goodbye for me, in case I—uh—don't see her no more." As he slid away from the landing, Uncle Jeff called back: "You can have my salmon spear, Zack. You know where I hid it. It's with the dynamite, an' you can have that, too."

Then the old poacher bent to his paddling and to the practical detail of his brazen adventure, pausing only occasionally to indulge in the delights of self-pity and persecution.

He caught two glimpses of Gideon Andrews during the next three days, and once found where the warden had built a fire the size of the bottom of a tea boiler. He thrilled now to the game of cat and mouse, his skill enchanting his ego, his every move a sly perfection. Early on the morning of Monday, he played his ace, a figurative card he had designed and developed himself. On Jim Brown sand beach, near the Black Lake Trail, where deer were known to be plentiful, he drew up his canoe, stepped out, and made stealthy but readable tracks into the bush. It mustn't be too obvious. He knew Gid Andrews already for a hound on his trail.

In the brush he circled, stepping on stones and roots, leaving no trace that a man might read. He came back out on the lake on a dry ledge, stepped off into the congealing, waist-deep water, waded up the shore till he caught the stern of his canoe. He dragged the canoe back into the water, climbed in, rounded White Otter Point, and poled up White Otter Stream for eleven miles.

The one-eyed poacher was sure of his ruse. It had never failed, and Zack Bourne was the only man living who shared the trick with him. Gid Andrews would be searching for him over on Black Lake. At Simpson's Bark Landing on White Otter Stream, he lifted out the canoe and carried it over Mopang Ridge to Little Mopang Stream—and so on, safely, he thought, back to the very outskirts of Privilege.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, he lay in a spruce thicket bordering Stumpy Coldwillow's high mowing. The spot was an insulting and impudent mile from the very house where the warden lived! He had travelled twenty-one miles of hard going in six hours, and as he lay resting and priding himself, he peered through the thicket toward the old beech stump which he had so patiently salted for the past weeks. Closest to him lay his historic .45-70 Winchester, confiscated and redeemed innumerable times. Next to the rifle lay the jug of Hernando's Fiery Dagger, still half full. Beyond the rum lay the tattered knapsack, which had never held a legal trout.

That there Gid Andrews, with the mean eyes, thought Uncle Jeff, is layin' off in the brush on the Black Lake Trail, listenin' for a gunshot he'll never hear. I wonder how much I can git for that buck? 'Course, I'll save the loin for myself and maybe give Zack some.

He reached for the jug, drank, and drank again.

The salt lick was upwind and presently, as if by appointment, two does, a spikehorn, and a big buck stepped daintily from the shoulder-high spruces, necks stretching, nostrils distended. Their

tongues eagerly caressed the enticing salt. In the dimming light, the one-eyed poacher watched them fondly. Soundlessly he cocked his rifle.

He didn't want the big buck. The animal was not fat. He selected the spikehorn, waited till he got a clear sight, squeezed the trigger.

The sound of the discharge made the forest shudder briefly. The spikehorn lay still. The two does and the big buck had vanished. The old poacher lay where he was for a moment, then stood up and stalked to his game. He smiled, and tugged at his two stringy moustaches. No waste! His bullet had entered the deer's head just behind and below the right ear.

He dressed the animal in less than ten minutes, with a manual dexterity that would have pleased a juggler. He sectioned out the two loins, put them in his knapsack, and hid the paunch and hide. He hung the remainder high in a sprung sapling.

It would have taken a genius with two trained hounds to find an overturned leaf after Uncle Jeff finished his job. He shouldered his knapsack and started through the woods edging Stumpy's mowing, when the sound of footsteps froze him cold. He disappeared behind a giant beech, blending with the scenery, stone still, his rifle in one hand, his jug in the other.

Game Warden Gideon Andrews stepped into view not twenty feet away, walking slowly, beady eyes level. The old poacher quaked with consternation. Could it be that his tricks had failed? Was this sinister warden his match? Before he had attempted to answer these questions, a second warden stepped into view, almost on the heels of Gid Andrews. Uncle Jeff's surprise changed to astonishment as a third warden followed the first two. Next he was dumbfounded, for a fourth warden appeared, then a fifth, until, in all—if he had counted right—there were *eleven!*

They were walking fast, single file, and they passed within those twenty feet of him. It was clear that they had not heard the shot which had been fired ten or twelve minutes ago. Eleven game wardens! The one-eyed poacher, after his first shock, was enchanted, then vastly pleased.

He saw the whole thing plainly, and it reflected nothing but the greatest credit upon himself. For the ordinary poacher, one game warden was adequate to the peril and problem thereof. But for Thomas Jefferson Coongate, not even the crafty Gideon Andrews would suffice. Ten more of the standard variety had been pressed into service in emergency. At last, reflected the one-eyed poacher approvingly, the state had paid him proper recognition. They had realized after the long, wearying years, that he was equal approximately to eleven minions of the law.

It was probably one of the happiest moments in Uncle Jeff's life. His pleasure disarmed him. Maybe, he thought, cat-footing along behind the wardens, and veering off at a ninety-degree angle from their line of travel, maybe they'll bury me one of these days amongst all them kings, an' sech—like they would of buried that Robert Hood, from that there Sherwood Forest.

Now, in the gathering dusk, through the mists of his self-esteem, the one-eyed poacher's natural suspicions pierced him. Just how did the eleven wardens happen to be so close to town? Just how had his deceptive tracks at the Black Lake Trail been deciphered? Was there a living man—outside of Zack—who could read those tracks? No! It could not be. The new warden had simply given up hunting alone, and figured that eleven brains were better than one.

Uncle Jeff entered a dense cedar swamp, his moccasins soundless in the moss. He sat on a root and listened. The stillness hovered about him, having almost a texture like dark velvet. There was no step, no cracking twig, not even the drip of water. The old poacher built a tiny fire, sliced off a piece of loin and broiled it on a green cedar skewer. He ate and drank, and with his stomach comfortably filled and his skull pleasantly a-buzz with the fumes of Hernando's, he leaned against a cedar bole and slept till the grey of dawn.

He arose, stretched, and breakfasted on venison and rum. He carefully removed the evidences of his fire, then set off on a line which would bring him out on Mopang Lake above Leadmine Cove, near Zack Bourne's cabin. For a time, however, he zig-zagged, in order to pick up the track of the wardens. But he didn't cross it. Thus satisfied, he settled the shoulder straps of his knapsack and made fast going.

At Allen Stream, a mile from the lake shore, a faint sound brought him up short. The sound was a feeble but plaintively high-pitched whine. This was no bird, no squirrel. Nor was it any of those curiously human noises a porcupine can make. Crouching, Uncle Jeff slipped his rifle under his arm and crept toward the sound. Stooping low, he peered through the undergrowth. There, before him, just across the stream, he saw a little boy!

The child was perhaps six years old, pale, hollow-eyed, and very obviously lost. The blue saucer eyes stared wildly at the tall woodsman.

"Now jest you take it easy, little feller," said Uncle Jeff. His great hand eased out and touched the thin shoulder.

"What's your name, little man?"

"I'm hungry."

"What's your father's name?"

"I'm hungry."

Uncle Jeff examined him more closely. In one skinny hand, the child clutched a cloth rabbit.

"Lemme see your rabbit," asked the one-eyed poacher.

The small fingers tightened with frenzied strength, but Uncle Jeff was nevertheless able to identify the toy. Aunt Sue Emmet had given it to one of Jumbo Tethergood's innumerable children. The old poacher stooped, picked up the child and rested the small head against his chest.

"You must be little Pete Tethergood," he said. "I'm hungry," the child said, faintly.

Uncle Jeff propped the youngster against a fallen spruce, built a fire, and, in the tin can he used ordinarily for tea, boiled some venison with an onion, salted it, and thus produced a broth both savoury and sustaining. He cooled it carefully and fed it to the starving child. Meanwhile, he muttered soothing sounds. As he knelt by the lost urchin, he resembled in his tenderness a gnarled and fussy old grandmother.

"There, li'l feller, just you git that into your belly. That's venison broth, son. Shot practically in the new warden's backyard. It's got stren'th an'—wait a minute!" Instinctively, in his generosity, the one-eyed poacher had reached for the jug of Hernando's!

"Here you are, li'l man. This here'll grow hair on the palm of a Chinaman's hand. Hernando's Fiery Dagger. Why, son, me an' ole Zack Bourne have drunk mighty near a—"

At this point Uncle Jeff remembered the tender years of his companion, and took a drink for both of them. Replacing the cork in the neck of the jug, he shook his head in sad apology to the child, and said, "There'll come a time, son. But I guess we better wait a few more years, till you're maybe ten or eleven. I never teched a drop myself till I was nine."

The tousled child had listened in a daze to these philosophies and restraints, and now the small lids drooped and shut. The child slept.

It was about two hours later that Zack Bourne stepped from his cabin door and sighted the one-eyed poacher as he emerged from the back clearing. Zack promptly rushed back into the cabin to call his wife.

"Sarah! Come here! It's Jeff Coongate!"

Old Sarah Bourne turned from the stove at these disheartening words. The one-eyed poacher's visits to her cabin were invariably productive of intoxication, jack-lighting, game wardens and jail.

"Tell that varmint to go away an' not darken my door, Zack!"

ordered Sarah. "When he's with you, I feel like I've lost a husband."

"Come out here an' look!" screeched the excited Zack.

Indeed, this was the first time in his life that the one-eyed poacher felt certain of a warm welcome by Sarah. He came bearing a prize, the gift of gifts, a ray of sunlight into Sarah's lonely and childless life. The prize lay sound asleep against the old man's shoulder, a small hand clutching the outlaw's wrinkled neck. With superb skill the one-eyed poacher played his trump for Sarah.

"Sarah," he said, "I found this little feller lost on Allen Stream. Beat out, he was. A matter of hours till the long death sleep come on him. An' I says to myself, who but Sarah Bourne has the warm heart and wise knowledge to take this li'l man in an' nurse him back. So I fed him some venison broth—just so happened I had some loin with me—an' he fell asleep, and I picked him up an' brought him straight to your door."

Before Jeff was through this heart-rending speech, Sarah's old eyes were streaming and her arms were stretched forth.

"Give him to me, Jeff Coongate! You'll soil him with them evil hands of yours."

"I didn't give him no rum," said the one-eyed poacher righteously. "Just the venison soup."

"Venison," snorted Sarah, folding the child to her bosom, "at this time of year."

"Season'll open in a week or two," said Uncle Jeff. "You might say that deer was practically legal."

"Practically legal indeed! You never did nothin' that was practically legal."

"That's right," acknowledged Uncle Jeff, proudly. "I kep' my slate clean."

Now Sarah had discovered the cloth rabbit still clutched in the sleeping child's hand. "Why, Sue Emmet made that herself. She give it to Jumbo's middle boy, Alton."

"Yuh," said the one-eyed poacher. "I reco'nized it, too. Jumbo'll be relieved."

But Sarah was unhearing. A great wave of motherhood had swamped her and she carried the boy into the spare bedroom, undressed him, bathed him, bundled him up and tucked him away.

She returned to the kitchen to find Zack and Uncle Jeff working happily on the jug of Fiery Dagger. Sarah had been less than an hour at her mothering, yet the two old cronies, always fast workers, had proceeded splendidly with the jug, and were complimenting each other in handsome terms on past triumphs over the law.

"'Member the time I shot the stern off Jim Baker's canoe?" said Uncle Jeff.

Zack didn't remember it because Jeff hadn't done it, but in rum there is reverie—and they had talked of doing it.

"Yes," said Zack, laughing mellowly, "an' that Jim Baker couldn't swim a stroke."

"An' us on shore, laughin', while he floundered," chortled the one-eyed poacher. "An' them two marten skins down our pant legs, an'—why, what's the matter with you, Zack?"

Zack's face, indeed, wore a strange look. It had turned a sort of chartreuse green. His mouth hung open as his eyes roved from one window to another of the five which let light into the cabin kitchen.

"Here, have 'nother li'l taste of rum, Zack. You ain't feelin' good."

Zack shoved the jug away. "Never again!" he choked. "Look in them windows, Jeff! An' tell me—no, Sarah, *you* tell me. Do you see any game wardens lookin' in? If you don't see any, I'm a goner! I'm a goner, hear?"

Sarah looked. So did Uncle Jeff. They saw game wardens—two peering through each of the five windows, and another, Gideon Andrews, peering through the door.

"How many you count, Jeff?" said Zack, hoarsely.

"Eleven," said Uncle Jeff Coongate, with considerable pride. "Five times two is ten, an' one makes eleven. Come on in, boys," he added, gesturing grandly around the room. "Have li'l snifter. Warm you up."

Only one of the wardens entered—Gid Andrews, with gun drawn. He looked only at Uncle Jeff.

"I arrest you," he said.

"You do?" inquired the one-eyed poacher, with a luxurious yawn. He felt very safe and supreme, having thoughtfully hidden his knapsack with the contraband under Zack and Sarah's bed. He now reached for the jug, drank, wiped his lips with the back of his wrist, and said: "What's the charge, warden? Playin' cards on Sunday? Or, no—this is Tuesday, ain't it?"

"Kidnapping!" said Gideon Andrews; and the word sent a chill down Jeff's spine.

Sarah Bourne gasped. Zack furtively reached for the jug. The faces of the other ten wardens remained silent and stony at the five windows.

Uncle Jeff Coongate, his brain dancing like lightning, found himself in a magnificent position. If only he could control Zack, he held the cards for the play of a lifetime. Zack, merely out of indignation, might give him away, but Sarah Bourne would naturally believe anything about him that was bad. With eleven pairs of hostile eyes staring at him, it was impossible to wink at

Zack and get away with it. He leaped this hurdle by the simple expedient of bringing his heel down on Zack's instep, under the table. This brought a gleam of fury into Zack's face, and at the same time warned him of many dark people in the woodpile of Uncle Jeff's mind.

"All right, Warden," said Uncle Jeff, giving a fine imitation of a trapped convict, "I'll come quietly."

"You will, all right."

Uncle Jeff noted to his inner satisfaction that Gideon Andrews was trembling slightly. From fear, Uncle Jeff blandly decided. He was, however, wrong.

The warden's gun swung toward Uncle Jeff. "Where's the boy?"

"What boy?" said Uncle Jeff, stalling.

"*My son Amos!*"

It was only by a magnificent effort that the one-eyed poacher smothered his croak of amazement. Because of the lost child's toy, which had belonged to a Tethergood urchin, Jeff had believed the child to be a Tethergood. Now he divined that the warden's child had been playing with Jumbo's children and had lost himself on the strange road home. It was all working out wonderfully, as Sarah Bourne got in her word.

Pointing a rugged and accusing finger, glaring over her spectacles, the innocent old Sarah cried: "You, Jeff Coongate! Trial an' terror always follows in your wake! You told me you found that pore li'l child—an' you been in the woods, starvin' him."

"I only starved him a little mite," said Jeff, softly.

"You terrible man! You torturer. You might of killed him."

"No," said Jeff, "I wasn't goin' to kill him."

"Oh! Oh! An' you carried on so, about how you nursed him, an' loved him. Oh—I hate you, Jeff Coongate."

Zack Bourne, who was by now awakening to the beauty of the one-eyed poacher's scheme, tucked in a barb for good luck.

"All these years this man has claimed to be my friend," he told the warden. "Now his true nature comes out. He is a fiend an' a polecat an' a snake. Unbeknownst to me, an' my dear wife, he has used our own house, where we've fed and bedded him, to hide this kidnapped little boy."

Several of the other wardens had now come in and grouped around the repentant poacher.

"Well, men," he said at last, "you got me. My sins has overtook me. The boy's in the spare bedroom."

It was then, according to legend, that the bedroom door opened and the little boy appeared, sleepy-eyed, fogged by his experience, and dressed in one of Zack Bourne's red undershirts. Dazed by

the light, he followed the voice which had last spoken, remembering it as friendly and soothing. In fact, it was all the one-eyed poacher could do to keep little Amos Andrews from sitting on his lap.

"Go away, boy," he said gruffly. "Your father's over there—him with the green eyes."

The child reached out and touched Uncle Jeff lovingly on the shoulder and then dashed for his father. And there the scene ended, with the wardens filing away, five ahead of Uncle Jeff Coongate, five of them behind. . . .

The trial was held at Mopang Courthouse, Judge Beeswater presiding, Simon Scanlon prosecuting, and Thomas Jefferson Coongate the attorney for his own defence. It was a great and hilarious trial, even as back-country trials are considered. Prosecution showed—or attempted to show—through the vengeful Gideon Andrews, how the boy had been playing with Tethergood children, had wandered off, had fallen into the hands of the defendant, who had held him captive in the woods for four days; how the desperate and harassed father had returned from dogging the foot tracks of the defendant and found his child missing; how he, the father, had enlisted the services of fellow wardens for the search, how they had started out on that Monday afternoon, lain all night in the swamp, finally picked up the signs on Allen Stream where the defendant and the stolen child had eaten, and thence followed them to the Bourne cabin.

Jeff Coongate called the child himself as the first witness. "Little feller," said the one-eyed poacher, "tell 'em the truth, just like it happened."

"I told my daddy," said the child. "He won't believe me."

"I always thought he looked like a man as wouldn't trust his own son," said Uncle Jeff, patting the child's knee.

"Objection!" barked the prosecution.

"Order!" yelped Judge Beeswater.

"I woke up," said the boy, his round eyes filling with wondrous admiration as he stared at Uncle Jeff, "an' I saw you there. In the dark woods, by the water."

"What did I do then?" asked the defence attorney, preening his moustaches and coyly eyeing the jury.

"You gave me some soup. It was wonderful soup."

"You're dang' right it was. I made it myself, out of"—Uncle Jeff gulped, and retracted hastily—"out of an onion."

"It had meat in it," the witness persisted, warming to the memory.

"Yes—an' ole piece of pork I happened to have. What did I do then, little boy?"

"You held me in your arms. Your whiskers pricked me."

Uncle Jeff frowned at this candid exposure of his softer nature.

"And then?"

"You took me to the cabin where the old lady put me to bed. Sometimes I walked. Sometimes you carried me."

It was by now clear to the court that, far from kidnapping the child, the culprit had saved its life. It was even clear to Warden Gideon Andrews, who looked mystified and sullen.

Judge Beeswater stated that the charges were preposterous. He made a ringing apology to the one-eyed poacher, who accepted it with sorrowful resignation like one who long has been unjustly accused and maltreated. Three old ladies wept noisily, and inwardly promised to bake chocolate layer cakes for the apparently dejected prisoner.

Then Judge Beeswater grandly freed the prisoner and told all concerned to go about their business. They all started to obey when, in a chilling voice, Game Warden Gideon Andrews rose to protest.

"Your Honour, I want to ask my boy a few questions."

The good judge frowned, but granted the plea.

"Amos," said Gid Andrews, "you said there was meat in the soup the man cooked for you."

"Yes, Daddy, there was."

"Did the man say what kind of meat it was?"

"Yes, Daddy. He said it was venison."

"What?"

"Venison—deer meat—you know, Daddy."

The game warden smiled craftily. As the towering Jeff Coongate, face crimson with wrath, descended to the floor of the court, Gid Andrews clapped a hand on his shoulder and arrested him for killing a deer out of season.

The warden was, of course, within his rights. But he had overplayed his revenge. In the fastest trial for game-law violation ever held in Mopang County, the one-eyed poacher of Privilege was convicted as charged.

Judge Beeswater, tight-lipped and stern, looked Warden Andrews fair in the eye while he imposed sentence on Uncle Jeff.

"I sentence you, Thomas Jefferson Coongate, to thirty days in jail and a fine of forty dollars and costs. Both fine and jail sentence are hereby commuted, and shall be stricken from the records of this court. Court adjourned."

Within a few days after this, a tactful State Department transferred Warden Gideon Andrews to a less rugged part of the state where there was only pheasant shooting and perch fishing. And shortly thereafter, in the same mail with his Spanish War pension cheque, the one-eyed poacher of Privilege received an envelope

containing, to his horror and chagrin, a formal-looking paper.

"Zack!" he said, brokenly, "see what they done to me!"

Zack took the document and regarded it thoughtfully. "Why, hell, Jeff! That's a huntin' licence. They give it to you, free, for savin' that boy an' to kind of apologize for what that Gid Andrews tried to do to you."

"I don't want no apology. Nor least of all do I want no huntin' licence. They've insulted me, Zack! An' they've fixed me so if I shoot a deer, it'll be legal. It ain't fair—after me savin' that li'l boy."

Uncle Jeff smiled as he thought of the boy. "He was a cute little feller, Zack," he said. "My, but I loved him. Trusted me, he did, an' laid his arms 'round my neck. It's a downright pity an' shame that he should have to be raised up with a game warden for a father, right in the house with him." As he spoke, the one-eyed poacher dreamily tore up his hunting licence and scattered the fragments in Sim Pease's sugar barrel. "Let's go out now an' kill a small moose."

* * *

COINCIDENCE

Robinson noticed the machine while he was waiting for his morning train to town.

"Your weight and fortune told for one penny," read the inscription.

"What have I to lose?" murmured Robinson, stepping on to the scale and inserting his penny.

The little card dropped down and he read wonderingly: *Your name is Robinson and you weigh* 11 *stones* 2 *lbs.*

"Marvellous," exclaimed Robinson. "What a coincidence!"

Sceptically he inserted another penny, and again the card read: *Your name is Robinson and you weigh* 11 *stones* 2 *lbs.*

A young Irishman was standing near. "Please," called Robinson, "do come and try this. You wouldn't believe it."

The Irishman got on. His card read: *Your name is O'Brien and you weigh* 12 *stones* 6 *lbs.*

Robinson couldn't get over it. Once more he stepped on to the scale and inserted a penny. This time his card bore another message: *You damn fool*, he read, *you've iust missed your train.*

TALE OF A QUEUE

She said I had great talent

by NORMAN EDWARDS

"I SUPPOSE," said the Duke of Rustington, "that you would now like to drink port?"

George St. George looked at his host and smiled for the first time since he had started his dinner. The duke looked at him rather grimly; he knew what his fat, gossip-writing friend was thinking, and he was not surprised: the dinner had been foul. "I suppose," he repeated, "that you would now like to drink port?"

"That's not half a bad idea, Harry," answered George St. George, his moon-calf face glowing with anticipatory pleasure in the candle light. "A bottle of that '98 Cockburn would suit me very well."

"I daresay," snapped his host, "but you won't get any. You had the last bottle of the Cockburn last time you dined with me; but I can offer you 'Empire' brandy—or whisky."

"Whisky?" queried George St. George. "What sort of whisky?" His eyes shone.

"That I cannot tell you, George," answered the duke with elaborate care for the truth, "because the label on the bottle is not informative. But I have it on the authority of a most unprepossessing man who has started a wine shop near here, that the whisky is—ah!—drinkable. Which will you have—brandy, or . . ."

"A glass of spirits of salts would do," snarled George St. George with sudden temper. "Anything would do—after the dinner we've just eaten."

The duke looked pained; and he was about to reproach his old friend for his childish outburst when George St. George, acting under the pressure of a long subdued grievance, broke into full cry.

"What's the matter, Harry? Why no port? Why that awful dinner? And why 'Empire' brandy. . . .?"

George St. George banged an empty glass on the table. It broke; and he looked at the stem of the glass, which remained

between his fingers, with outraged eyes. "And why these—these glasses," he shrilled. "Why these damned 'Utility' glasses? Why not the Waterford glasses? Upon my soul, Harry, you surprise me. You surprise me very much."

"It's all Grace's fault," said the duke sulkily. "It's no good blaming me."

George St. George looked at his host in astonishment. "What's Grace got to do with it?" he asked. "I mean, she's been dead at least six months, so what . . ."

"I know, I know," butted in the duke, a touch of petulance marring the customary urbanity of his voice, "but the fact is, old boy, Grace left all her money to the Labour Party, and to be quite honest with you, I'm damned hard up."

For a moment—more than that, nearly half a minute—there was what Edwardian lady novelists called a deathly silence in the duke's dining room. Indeed, the late Miss Corelli would indubitably have maintained that one could have heard a pin drop; and the change in George St. George's appearance was startling. His normal complexion was one of bright scarlet, but now a sort of pallid tinge had mingled with the rubicund glow, and he looked as if he might be sick at any moment.

"Good God!" he exclaimed at last. "You . . . you don't mean . . ."

"I mean exactly what I've just told you," said the duke. He looked morose, and he spoke morosely; and George noticed with a thrill of horror that there were tears in his friend's eyes. "She told me some two years ago that she had 'espoused a great cause'—Grace would talk like that some times, you know—and I thought she'd started another of her hobbies. But no. She joined the Labour Party. And when her will was read, I found that she hadn't left me a stiver. Me, her husband! Me, the seventh duke! She'd espoused me—but she left every cent—about half a million—to . . . to . . . to . . ."

Emotion, whether rage or self pity George St. George couldn't decide, interfered with the duke's speech. The power to articulate deserted him. As an alternative to speech, however, he gave way to physical violence. He picked up the top half of George St. George's broken glass and flung it—with excellent aim—at a painting of his late duchess that hung on the wall behind George St. George. George ducked, and then swung round. to see the result. He whistled: an extremely fine portrait of the duchess (painted in 1924 by Gerald Kelley) had suffered considerable damage.

With a shaking hand the duke poured out Empire brandy into his friend's glass and then into his own. Both drank; and except for a sudden eructation from George, both friends were silent for a

while. At last, unable to bear the look of cowed misery on the duke's face, George St. George gave tongue.

"You must have treated her dam' badly, Harry."

The Duke of Rustington placed his glass on the table and looked straight into George St. George's rather narrow eyes. Inwardly, George quailed: it is never very satisfactory to see sudden murder leap into the eyes of an old friend; and to hide his fear he drank deeply. But suddenly the duke giggled, and George put down an empty glass.

"To tell you the truth, George," said the duke, "I never treated her at all!"

"What! Not even to the pictures?"

"No."

"Stupid of you."

"I know. But all those queues . . . No. I can put up with a lot, but queueing I *can't* put up with."

George St. George sighed and filled his glass with brandy. "I know, I know," he muttered. "Queues are the devil. Absolutely the devil."

"What do you know about 'em," snarled his friend, suddenly angered by George St. George's tone of voice. "I'll bet you've never queued in your life. You're too dam' lazy."

"On the contrary, my dear Harry," rebuked George in his fruity voice, "it is no exaggeration to say that queueing ruined my life."

The raucous laughter of the Duke of Rustington echoed in that vast dining room in a way which would have excerbated the nerves of a less sensitive soul than George St. George. It is conceivable that some of our more modern composers would have felt a faint interest in the overtones which resulted from the duke's hilarity; and it is more than likely that the late Béla Bartók would have been inspired to put on paper the cacophonous notes inherent in the duke's laughter. But on the whole it was not a lovely noise the duke emitted: it was, if anything, reminiscent of the braying of a doctored donkey. So George thought. And as an afterthought, he decided that an ass would be more suitable as an object of comparison.

"You," cackled the duke, "you . . . oh, my dear George, don't make me laugh. Your life was ruined the day you heard a cork say farewell to a bottle."

George St. George had a certain dignity if no grace, and he sat in aloof silence until the duke's laughter petered out. "Well, go on," said the duke at last. "How did queueing ruin *your* life?"

George shrugged his heavy shoulders. "It's a good many years ago," he admitted, "just about the time the 'Talkies' came in."

"Ah, the kinema."

"Cinema."

"Pardon my Greek, George. Go on."

"Well," continued George St. George, "in those days there was a little cinema off the Tottenham Court Road which specialised in Continental films. Remember it?"

"Yes."

"I was engaged in those days."

"Engaged, George? By the cinema? Commissionaire?"

"Don't be obtuse, Harry," snapped George. "I was engaged in the sense that I was seriously considering matrimony."

"Any money?"

"Quite a bit," admitted George. "Quite a bit. At least, her father had."

The duke nodded. "Makes sense—so far," he conceded. "Go on."

"I was keen on films in those days," continued George St. George. "In fact, I was a bit of a film critic, and one night I queued up outside this particular cinema rather late. Lot of people in front of me. We stood two abreast in the queue. . . ."

"And next to you," cut in the duke, "was a pretty girl?"

"Well—an attractive woman, let us say," admitted George. "And as the queue edged forward we got into conversation. Purely technical conversation."

"Quite."

"About French films."

"Quite."

"Well, when we got to the box office, the last two seats were gone, and as it was getting late, and we both felt hungry, I accepted her invitation to have supper with her in her flat."

The duke yawned. "Pretty ordinary story, so far," he remarked in a bored voice.

"You wait," said George grimly. "And don't interrupt."

"I hope you're not going into details," said the duke in a fastidious tone of voice. "I know that coarse streak in you."

"When we got back to the flat," went on George St. George, pointedly ignoring his friend's offensiveness, "she told me that she was a widow—her name was Mrs. Malvue. She showed me into a room which absolutely took my breath away."

"Windows not open, George?"

"Now who's being coarse?" snarled George St. George. "I tell you, it was a wonderful room. Oak panelling which must have been taken from some Elizabethan manor. A warm, intimate atmosphere. You know: shaded lights; glowing fire; and on a table near the fire, a cold supper for two. . . .

"She must have had second sight and seen you in the queue before she went out," remarked the duke with a faintly dirty laugh.

"And in an ice bucket," went on George, "a magnum of Bollinger, 1919."

"Pretty well frozen to death, I should say," muttered the duke.

"Shut up," said George St. George loudly. And then he resumed in his normal voice: "After a drink she confessed to me that she was a film actress and that she was due to leave London the next morning to make a film in Paris. She was most enthusiastic about her part, and after supper, she asked me if I'd care to rehearse one of the big scenes with her."

"What sort of scene, George?" asked the duke gently.

George St. George looked coyly into his brandy. "To tell you the truth, Harry," he answered, "it was a love scene. A rather—er—passionate love scene."

The Duke of Rustington filled George St. George's glass and then his own. He looked at his portly friend with something like respectful admiration. "I must say," he said in a tone of voice that made George St. George glow with pleasure, "that you do have the most amazing luck, George. You say she was attractive?"

"Very."

"And she asked you—*you*—to play a passionate love scene with her?"

"Yes."

"What—what did you have to do?"

"She gave me a copy of the script, you see, and I had to—er—make love to her at—er—appropriate lines. . . ."

"Go on, George."

"Well, it wasn't difficult. The play called for an actor who was—er—pretty ardent. You know what I mean, Harry?"

"Yes, I know what you mean," said the duke grimly, "though I doubt if 'ardent' is the *mot juste*."

"It'll do," said George hastily gulping at his brandy. "Anyway, I had to start off by kissing her pretty—er—fiercely, and she admitted right away that I had the makings of a film actor in me. In fact, by the time we'd finished the—er—rehearsal, she said I had great talent."

The Duke of Rustington's hand shook a little as he refilled George St. George's glass. "All very interesting, George," he said, "but I fail to see what all this has to do with queueing ruining your life. Didn't back one of her films, did you?"

"No, I did not."

"A very fascinating experience, George. I suppose it would be no exaggeration to say that you enjoyed yourself?"

"Very much," confessed George St. George, "except that she would have all the lights full on. And there was a funny sort of 'clicking' noise going on all the time we were—er—er . . ."

"Rehearsing," finished the duke sombrely.

"Yes."

"Perhaps she was frightened of the dark," suggested the duke, a rather leery look in his eye.

George St. George sighed. "Ah, if only she had been, if only she had been!"

"What on earth do you mean?" asked the duke.

"Difficult to tell you, Harry."

The duke gaped. "Good Lor'!", he exclaimed. "You're blushing. Go on. Have some brandy. Help yourself."

"Thanks, Harry."

"And cough it up," went on the duke—rather crudely, it must be admitted—"get it off your chest, old boy. No need to be shy with me. After all, we were at Eton together."

"Well, Harry," murmured George St. George, "a few months later I went to Paris with my fiancée."

"Yes? Go on, go on man!"

"And one night, after a jolly good dinner at a place I know, Emily asked me. . . ."

"Do you mean to tell me," interrupted the duke, "that you were once engaged to a girl with the name of Emily?"

"Yes. Why not? Her father. . . ."

"Skip it, George. Emily asked—what?"

"She asked me to—er—show her Paris."

"Ah!"

"You see, she was curious . . ."

"The Emily's of this world usually are, George."

"Quite."

"And so you went places?"

"Yes. We saw a film. . . ."

The duke leapt to his feet, his eyes almost popping out of his head. "George," he shouted. "You don't mean to tell me that . . . that clicking noise. . . ."

George St. George sighed heavily and gulped brandy. "Yes," he said. "You've got it."

"You and . . . and . . . what was her name?"

"Mrs. Malvue."

"A hidden camera! Filmed you—and her!"

"Yes."

The duke licked his lips and sat down again. He stared in silence at his friend for nearly a minute, and at last a gloating smile crept over his ducal face.

"Was it a *good* film, George?" he asked in dulcet tones.

George St. George nodded austerely. "Yes," he answered, "it was. In fact, technically, it was perfect. There's no doubt I'm—er—photogenic."

"Would it pass the censor, George?"

"Not in a million years," said George with a ring of conviction in his voice. "Not in twenty thousand billion million trillion years."

"And Emily?"

"She was there one minute—next to me, I mean, and gone with the wind the next."

"Hard luck, George."

"So I thought, at the time."

"Oh, so queueing didn't ruin your life after all?"

"No. But it might have done. And mind you, Harry, when Emily broke off the engagement, I was very upset. But later on, when I heard that her father had gone bankrupt. . . ."

The Duke of Rustington started to laugh. He filled George's glass and then his own. And when he'd stopped laughing, he lifted his glass to George. "A lucky escape, old boy," he said. And drank deeply. George St. George did likewise.

* * *

EX CATHEDRA

"Brethren, it is written that 'Wine maketh glad the heart of man.' It follows then that to use wine moderately is our duty. Now there is, doubtless, none of my male hearers who cannot drink his four bottles without affecting his brain. However, let him—if by the fifth or sixth bottle he no longer knoweth his wife—if he beat and kick his children, and looks on his dearest friend as an enemy—refrain from an excess displeasing to God and man . . .

"But whoever, after drinking his ten or twelve bottles, retain his senses sufficiently to support his tottering neighbour, or manage his household affairs, or execute the commands of his temporal and spiritual superiors, let him take his share quietly and be thankful for his talent. Still, let him be cautious . . . It is but seldom that our kind Creator extends to any one the grace to be able to drink safely sixteen bottles, of which privilege he hath held me, the meanest of his servants worthy . . .

". . . And you, my pious hearers . . . follow the precept of St. Peter, try all, and stick by the best."

BISHOP OF TRÈVES, 17th Century, *in a Sermon*

OTHER WORLDS THAN THIS

'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Forests at the bottom of the sea—the branches and leaves.
Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds—the thick tangle, the openings, and the pink turf,
Different colours, pale grey and green, purple, white and gold—the play of light through the water,
Dumb swimmers there among the rocks—coral, gluten, grass, rushes—and the aliment of the swimmers,
Sluggish existences grazing there, suspended, or slowly crawling close to the bottom :
The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray or disporting with his flukes,
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy sea-leopard, and the sting-ray,
Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes—sight in those ocean depths—breathing that thick breathing air, as so many do . . .

WALT WHITMAN, 1819-1892

The Witch's Fate

Cesarious tellis how som tyme ther was in Englond a woman that usid sorcerie. And on a day as she was ready to eatt, she heard a crow cry beside her, and sodanlie the knyfe that was in her hande fell. And hereby she demyd that her death drew nere, and so she fell seke, ready to dye. And she sent after a monk and a non that was her childer, and chargid thaim for her sake that as soon as she was dead thai shulde sew her in a deer-skin, and then that thai shulde close her in a tombe of stone, and that thai shulde fasten the coveryng theron, stronglie bothe with lead and strong iron, and that thai shulde close this stone and bynde it aboute with the strong chains, and then that thai shulde say mass and pray for her aboute her bodye.

And if she lay thus safely two days, then she chargid thaim to bery her uppon the third day in the erth. And so all this was done, and the furste nyghtis, as clerkis was sayand ther prayers aboute her, fiends brake the gates of the kirk, and come in unto her and brake both of the chains that was at either end; and the myddyll chain abode styll whole. And uppon the second nyght aboute cokkraw, ther come in suche a throng of fiends that they that saw it semyd that the temple turnyd upside down.

So ther came a fiend that was most uglie of all . . . and he come unto this tombe and callid her by her name and bad her ryse . . . And ther he tuke her oppynlie befor all men and bare her oute of the kirk. And ther befor the gates ther was ordained a blak hors, and that one uglie, and here-uppon was she sett; and then anon she and all this felowshup vanysshid away.

Quoted by G. G. COULTON in *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation*
C. 14*th Century*

Curing the Ague

I took, early in the morning, a good dose of Elixir, and hung three spiders about my neck, and they drove my ague away—Deo gratias.

ELIAS ASHMOLE, Diary, April 11, 1681

Housewife's Choice

These were the days wherein were practised the triumphs and trophies of cookery. One of these triumphs is the construction of a ship of confectionery, with guns charged with actual powder, and a castle of pyes containing live frogs and birds. After the firing of the guns the ladies are advised to 'take the eggshells full of sweet waters and throw them at each other.

All dangers being seemingly over, by this time you may suppose they will desire to see what is in the pyes; where, lifting first the lid off one pye, out skip some frogs, which makes the ladies to skip and shreek; next after, the other pye, whence come out the birds, who, by a natural instinct, flying in the light will put out the candles; so that, what with the flying birds and skipping frogs, the one above, the other beneath, will cause much delight and pleasure to the whole company.' These were the delights of the nobility before good housekeeping left England.

From *The Accomplisht Cook*, 1665

Cave

Someone is stealing up the stair.
Unloose me, William! Beware! Beware!
No, it's only a London sparrow, darling,
Flown in by the window, or else a mad starling;
There's nobody there.

Listen! a hand is striking a match.
Close the door; quickly; drop the latch.
No, it's only the Whitechapel wind, my pretty,
Laden with darkness, and pleading for pity.
There's nobody there.

Shoo-oo!—Near the rail where the twilight lingers,
I can see his long arms and spidery fingers.
And there's grass in his beard, and gorse in his hair.
I fear for you, William. Beware! Beware!
There's Somebody there.

HERBERT PALMER

Extraordinary

Now, on the damp banks of the river Eurotas where the forest is so thick that one never sees light, there lived an *extraordinary* young girl, whose skin was the colour of night-blue, who was mysterious as the new moon, and as sweet as the Milky Way. And so she was called Leda.

She really was nearly blue, for the blood of irises ran in her veins, and not, as in yours, the blood of roses. Her nails were more blue than her hands and her nipples bluer than her breasts, her elbows and her knees were quite azure. Her lips shone with the colour of her eyes which were blue as deep water. Her flowing hair was as dark and as blue as the evening sky and lay alive along her arms, so that she seemed to have wings. She loved only the water and the night.

PIERRE LOUŸS, *Twilight of the Nymphs*,
Translated by PHILLIS DUVEEN

Take Off

Horse and hattock,
Horse and go,
Horse and palatis, Ho, Ho!

Spell used by witches when mounting their broom sticks

PETITE COUSINE

He had not expected her to grow like this, like a young filly in a meadow

by HERMAN TEIRLINCK

WHEN Mr. Vincent heard that his uncle Paul planned to spend a day with him, in the company of Petite Cousine, he went about town to buy some playthings for the child.

Though Mr. Vincent was by no means young any longer, he actually possessed an uncle who, though a few years his senior, had married a young widow of Antwerp some time before. This woman of wonderful beauty had a child that was lovely as the fresh, young day, and Mr. Vincent called her Petite Cousine, my little cousin. Uncle Paul's wife died soon after their marriage, but this was not as tragic as one would think at first sight. For she deceived her husband with an officer of the Green Lancers, on barrack days, and with a major domo of the Regents at all other times.

On a Wednesday, in the fullness of summer, Mr. Vincent received the tidings that Uncle Paul was on the way to Paris with Petite Cousine and would stop at his house on Thursday, to rest and enjoy himself. He was very pleased with this unexpected visit. He gave ample instructions to Filmene, the maid, and had a curious conversation with Huplinck, his cat, from which it appeared that he looked forward eagerly to coming events.

He walked around the town with joyful gait and in his thoughts made all sorts of plans which, barely conceived, dissolved into thin air. He had no idea what to buy for Petite Cousine; but it became a festival, which filled the near future like the atmosphere of a summer country fair with multicoloured flags. He stood upon the threshold of ten shops in turn, and every time he thought the better of it, smiled innocently and moved on. The show window of a doll shop brought him to a final decision. He entered.

He became very busy; he wished to see everything so as to make a good choice. He handled the wax puppets with their beautiful clothes of brocade and silk and satin. He nodded at the imperturbable little doll faces and soon enjoyed hugely this little world of clowns and marionettes. The shopkeeper, a fat little fellow with a good-natured face, displayed heavenly patience, and it really

looked as if Mr. Vincent was greatly abusing this tolerance. He asked information on everything. That doll with her yellow curls over there, could she say Papa and Mama ? He pulled the gilded string and listened repeatedly, and with joy, to the squeaky little voice. And that other one, could she sleep if one laid her down ? Indeed, she could. He tried it out, for his own satisfaction. But the most beautiful of all was, he thought, a large doll with porcelain teeth. She smiled with them to warm your heart. He took the doll in his fingers and went over to the window, into the full light.

Carefully he turned her round and round, in the sunlight. She wore an evening gown after the French fashion, just like grand ladies, a jabot with genuine lace, and a frock of shining taffeta, sprinkled with moss roses, the colour of light tea. Her tiny head was crowned with a high pouffe, and across it three purple pumpkins were fastened with blue ribbons. A beauty spot trembled on her left cheek.

And, Mr. Vincent asked, what can she do ? She can do *something*, I hope ?

The shopkeeper blushed with pride. Silently he took the doll, wound up a screechy spring with an invisible key and placed her upon the smooth counter. For a second she remained motionless, then she was moved by a small and jerky sort of life. She took a few perky steps and, making a slow and most respectful bow, said, " Good day, ma'am, how do you do ? "

She was a marvel. Mr. Vincent declared he would have no other doll, and his decision seemed so irrefutable that the funny little doll man never hesitated to double the price for so resolute an old man, and as a remuneration for his own great servility. Without a murmur Mr. Vincent paid the price. He had the toy placed in a white cardboard box, and while the shopkeeper fastened a red string round it and talked, Mr. Vincent looked out into the sunlit street with satisfaction. And thus he saw the eager face of a poor child, pressed against the low window panes, staring covetously at the feast of so many colours. He thought : You poor thing ; your eyes filled with fire have seen the little lady's bow.

He felt unpleasantly moved and turned away. Fearing his feeling of pity, he thought of Petite Cousine, and although in his heart he recognized the rights of the other child, he completed without qualms the preparations for Petite Cousine's enjoyment.

Like a smile he entered his home, together with a ray of sunshine that lay in waiting across the front door till someone should open it. He spent the whole afternoon experimenting with the doll, and after supper Filmene, too, had to see and admire the lovely purchase.

Thursday was a beautiful day. At half-past ten in the morning

a hired carriage halted in front of the garden gate, and Mr. Vincent himself crossed the hall and went out onto the high stoop where, in his violet house wrap, he waited in friendly fashion and with cheerful eyes. He saw how Filmene opened the carriage door and how she helped the old uncle with great care; he was, it seemed, suffering more than ever from gout. He jubilated softly: "Welcome . . . please be welcome . . ."

Uncle Paul was placed in the golden sunshine like a sagging bushel of clothes. But indescribable is the feeling that came over Mr. Vincent when shortly afterwards he saw a sweet lady hop out of the carriage. She wore a light travelling jacket, and her fluttering skirts blew across the most lovely little feet in the world. Her face shone like a peach warmed by the sun and her golden red hair, thick and curly, flowed richly from beneath a little hat with red primulas. She was Petite Cousine. Idiotically, Mr. Vincent murmured, "That is Petite Cousine . . ."

He was ashamed of his violet dressing gown. He felt ashamed of his entire ludicrous attitude. He felt ashamed of standing upon the stoop like an ancient gout sufferer, incapable of receiving his guests and prevented by flannel, baize or duffel from being gallant. His situation grew completely unbearable when Petite Cousine came gaily tripping along and made the round of the pond in which the clear hues of her robe were reflected in quickly succeeding colours. She called out:

"Oh, cousin . . . how quiet you look . . .!"

She could have said nothing worse. To Mr. Vincent the word "quiet" was a palliative, the politeness of which hindered him like the pronouncing of names. He smiled none the less, to hide his disappointment, and opened his arms, as Petite Cousine had fallen around his neck with sweet rustling of her clothes.

During dinner, which was served on the sunny porch next to the dining room, he could not withstand his desire to hear something about the age of that incredibly beautiful girl. Uncle Paul allowed her seventeen Mays, and to these—meticulous as he was—he added three months and eleven days. Silently Mr. Vincent stared at the blue glycine-bells which jingled over the woodwork of the porch, between the green foliage and the golden skies, and then he remembered that six years had gone by since he had visited Uncle Paul at Antwerp. He had not expected Petite Cousine to grow like this, like a young filly in a meadow. Thus he said:

"My child, the days have passed me by. I have stayed behind with a little girl, fair of curls and playful . . . It is the past. *I* am the past, I know it well. Be merciful and allow me to enjoy in abundance what the summer brings to me: flowers sprung from their buds and a young woman, born from the fairy tales of Time.

I thank this magician, though already he silvers my head with dangerous threads and compresses my future more and more in the wrinkles of my face. Will you have some more olives, Petite Cousine ? "

" Merci-merci, mon cousin."

Mr. Vincent did not mention the doll. He was too busy holding a conversation he had not expected and he was, moreover, obliged to show some interest in his uncle's gout. Uncle often busied himself describing diseases and medicines and advising his cousin to beware of both. Mr. Vincent accepted the advice with great patience and now and again glanced at Petite Cousine as if to say : " Ha ha . . . there's plenty of time before we shall have to worry about old men's diseases . . ."

And every moment he felt anew that so young an outlook on life did not harmonize with the quiet homeliness of his purple dressing gown. The dessert brought him the idea of an outing.

" Brabant," he said, " is the land of fine verdure. You must not leave it again without having seen the picture of all that tender and varying green, tones of great clarity interwoven with the intelligence of the most perfect symphonies. The weather is lovely. The light is excellent, and I know some walks that are delicious."

The hint was taken, but Uncle Paul—who was toying with some sugared plums on a silver platter—declared that he would not come along but would be quite happy to stay at home. He had some letters to write and to fasten a mustard plaster somewhere which he could well do with Filmene's assistance. Mr. Vincent insisted that he should come along on the ride, but Petite Cousine said, " Leave him . . . He won't come anyhow. He is so soon exhausted . . . Poor papa . . ."

She laughed, threw the brown husk of a hazel-nut over Uncle Paul's head and suddenly announced her intention to sing. This led, first of all, to a quick conversation, in which Mr. Vincent learned that Petite Cousine was really on the way to Paris with very definite ideas. It gave him an involuntary shock to hear that there she was going to study in the conservatory, under the musical leadership of a certain Señor Alvarez, and that Uncle Paul completely agreed with this plan.

Later, however, when Petite Cousine was seated in the salon before the clavichord, and sang a song so that the air seemed filled with the flutterings of crystal birds, he understood that her decision was not a rash one and he even felt inclined to congratulate her with her strange prospects. He leaned back in his reed chair and listened with pleasure, his head filled with a world of sounds that whirled around and sometimes twinkled, like a display of trickling pearls. The clavichord possessed rare sounds and adorned with carefully

selected and brittle twanging of strings the suspended tones of Petite Cousine's voice.

Later he stood next to Petite Cousine, to turn the pages of her music. And so, close to her, he softly inhaled the delicious perfume of tuberoses which arose from her red-gold locks. She sang a short, tinkling aria from Mozart's "Magic Flute"; the sultry salon, heavy with its tapestries and curtains, was suddenly endowed with the light life of a strange musical box around the gilt and lacquered panels of the clavichord. It intoxicated Mr. Vincent, and the broad panels of his long dressing gown trembled against his calves.

"Petite Cousine," he whispered, "you bring into my quiet house a light full of wonders. Your song is like the blinding rays of a many branched chandelier, set with strings of diamonds and hung with mirrors of emeralds and rubies. Truly you bewitch the air you breathe, and it seems to me as if you are the rosy goddess who, arisen from the abyss of the green-dark ocean, sprays the clear azure with sweet-sounding bells of foam."

She was suddenly silent and looked up at him, astonished. She saw his good-hearted smile and solemnly she arose, to walk slowly to the porch. There she turned round with a quizzical glance; mysteriously she laid a finger across her lips and with her other hand pointed at Uncle Paul who nodded and slept where he was sitting.

Of this opportunity Mr. Vincent made good use to escape to his bedroom so as to exchange his ludicrous voilet gown for something more adequate. He rummaged through all his closets and drawers, searched for his best clothes and made much of colour harmony when it came to the choice of ties, a flowered waistcoat and socks. Finally, he stood before the high and narrow cheval-glass in gorgeous attire, and addressed himself in a neat little speech.

"Ha ha," he said, stretching out his arms and shaking the lace cuffs of his shirt that peeped from his black-purple sleeves. "Of what caprice of whimsical fate are you, dear sir, the victim? What do you intend to do, now that you are standing here like a Sunday child, your hands full of the richest favours and loaded with the luxuries of blind fortune? I understand, dear sir: you are out to deceive yourself concerning your own principles. You search for an excuse for your difficult confession and a hiding place for your roguish plans. But I tell you, dear sir, you are searching in vain, in vain!"

Mr. Vincent became truly arrogant and puffed out his chest. His eyes were shining.

"Sir," he resumed, "you must restrain your egotism and temper the decisions of a philosophy which in later days will prove insufficient to calm your conscience. Remember that the present

moment is not everything. Fear that the shadows of a doubtful past will lie broadly across the days which are still to come. Be afraid of yourself in the future, dear sir . . . The girl is very beautiful. She may be admired with respect; do not forget that. Are you going to abuse the confidence of a defenceless uncle? He has no idea of the recklessness of your desires and he entrusts to your instincts—which he believes honourable—the innocence of a young woman, still a child, the lovely fruit of a careful education. Shame on you, sir, if in your secret thoughts you intend to betray the peace of a greybeard and the guilelessness of a virgin."

Extremely satisfied with the tenor of these admonitions he left the room, to display his splendour on the porch.

Mr. Vincent sat next to his cousin in the tilbury borrowed of Mr. Daubrecourt-Sart, his friend. Petite Cousine, in the bright sunlight, was the picture of health. She held the reins herself, and the orange-clad groom, on a lower seat with his back towards them, seemed to hang out of the carriage. The daylight glittered powerfully on his brass buttons and on the gold embroidery of his cocked livery hat. He did not speak, he did not move, he did not breathe; he seemed to be a quiescent object of possible usefulness.

None the less, Mr. Vincent conversed very cautiously with Petite Cousine, on the rhythm of the jolting wheels and the veering of the springs. He was a guide to her, pointing out the beauty spots of the landscape that stretched away in the abundance of the summer day. He waved slowly with his yellow-clad hands or held the gold knob of his cane over the shining back of the dark-brown horse. They drove to Zeven-Born, via Stalle, Dworp and Rode. Petite Cousine, very dashing on the little box, held the taut reins firmly and at times made the whip whizz lightly through the air.

In Verrewinkel valley Mr. Vincent made a peculiar suggestion: the carriage was to be left for a while with the orange groom and the forest of Verrewinkel was to be traversed on foot. Enumerating the excellent reasons supporting his proposal, Mr. Vincent was uncertain and shy, and his uneasiness increased when Petite Cousine, suddenly halting the horse, looked at him long and inquiringly. She did not speak but her straight glances continued to stab against his hesitating forehead.

"Indeed, cousin," she said at last, "you are right. Nous ferons à pied la promenade . . ."

And they went.

The valley was wild and lay bathed in powdery sunshine. The light flowed as the finest dust; like a blue haze it milled around the tops of the trees and settled upon the grey-green meadows like a lazy streamlet. Along the road the silvery, capricious babbling

of the Merel Brook was clearly audible, and one could well imagine her firm voice where she struck rocks and heavy tree roots.

Until they reached the entrance of the forest Mr. Vincent remained silent, in shamed meditation. Under the first beech tree, however, he stopped still, took Petite Cousine's hand and, embracing the entire valley with a beautiful gesture of his eyes and arms, he said, "You see, my child, this is a picture of our lovely Brabant. How the valley cradle rocks! How truly it possesses an extraordinary cadence within its living loins, and how subtle this movement is. When I see such a spectacle I think of those wonderful German dances in three-quarter time and one accent. That accent throbs in the distance, all along, from beginning to end of every bar, and on it balances a lithe little song, moving softly, and bright of tone. Such is the valley in its colours and its being—a waltz of lines and of melodious hues . . . I am sorry, Petite Cousine, that I cannot express myself better."

They penetrated into the greenly glowing forest. The ancient trees lifted knotty roots from the moss-covered soil and their heavy trunks reached solemnly out towards the lilting dome of boughs and leaves. Here the day had a quieter appearance and the sun, tamed by the foliage, shone upon those rustling giants with a mauve light that seemed to penetrate both objects and beings and turn into an independent, quietly active life. The deep forest glowed green and strangely. It was filled with indefinite sounds that sometimes resembled a faraway choir of human voices.

Petite Cousine said, "I feel so afraid here, so insignificant . . ."

Strange vegetation arose on every side, motionless and mysterious. Unusual animals were hidden in the bush.

"Petite Cousine," said Mr. Vincent, "this is a temple full of mysteries and I am not surprised that you feel oppressed. The great practices of nature always frighten, because we little humans, my child, have remodelled nature with our hands and by the means of a conceited art. We have estranged our minds from her, to use it for supernatural purposes. We cannot, therefore, love her any more or respect her. And now she terrifies us as a mother is certain to frighten the children who have forsaken her. In the forest, Petite Cousine, lives the mystery of nature, and nothing can disturb it in its church of silence, so that at once we are merely frightened strangers. Look, a heavy power of love hangs in space! The ferns spread their finely laced leaves and form bouquets in the moss; the smaller vegetation parasites below, and everywhere flowers spring up, the tokens of a lovable ecstasy. Do you hear how under secret domes the ripe seed trickles hither and thither from dry calices? The ivy climbs along the sombre columns of this temple of burning sighs and loving delight. But above and below, on the

ground and in the tree tops, what teeming life, how splendid a joust of the desires, how mighty a love play is in progress !

" The finches, hedge sparrows and marsh titmice, the robin red breasts, orioles and kinglets—all these little folk, sharp of beak and light of wing, all those warblers of the forest, these jumpers and twig-dancers, with their carolling and whistling . . . do you hear them quarrel and titter, do you hear them proclaim their lusts, each in his own manner, filled with desire and intoxicated with life's abundance ? Shortly they will be tired or satisfied, and then, in the peaceful afternoon, arises the duet of two love-lorn blackbirds. Shortly the velvet evening will fall and then the cuckoo, with mysterious double tones, will blow the tattoo for the day. Shortly, Petite Cousine, the stars of night will peep through the richness of the foliage and then, in the stillness around, the High Priest of the magic wood-palace will speak—the nightingale with his crystal tongue and his sweet-voiced poetry. The eyes of the brown owl will shine chimerically, as he sits upon his throne of oak and listens with devotion. And grand, slowly moving, the wind will weave through the dark halls, puffing without wrath his invisible cheeks . . . Ha . . . Petite Cousine, it is, I assure you, a stirring ceremony.

" But more, more movement, more life is active on every hand. Three squirrels skittle across the branches, jump into space and try to grasp one another's tails. A badger lazes between two hazel bushes and, in his mind, thinks of some little love story, of no importance to us, but eagerly expected by him. A fieldmouse couple sits under a low beech tree and lovingly rub their muzzles together. What are they saying, Petite Cousine ? A whippoorwill waits in the dusk and in the mirror of a quieted pool makes sure of the gracefulness of his form and the perfection of his summer toilet. Moths and black-shielded drones whirr through the air. Strange spiders brood in brittle webs of, most extraordinary rendezvous. Six beetles form a circle and count and count, before they take to the wing. There is a terrible battle in the offing between armies of ants, gnats, worms and scorpions, while a monstrous insect with a brown hood and the timorous eyes of a plagiarist, stands on a little hill and, like a wooden monk, reads an unthinkable prayer . . . And that, Petite Cousine, is the awful mystery from which humanity has become estranged. That is the glorious happiness-in-love which men have run away from, like ludicrous fanatics, on the shaking ribs of the Rosinante of a so-called science. And you, my sweet child, are afraid of the dizzying truth of that only happiness because already you have turned your face towards the sad lie of human society . . . But let us walk, my dearest, and give me your hand."

She did this willingly and now they walked like happy children, their encradled hands dandling up and down with every double

step. They hardly spoke any more. Sometimes Mr. Vincent gazed long into the radiant face of the young girl, and while they walked an inexplicable feeling oppressed his heart and made his cheeks throb with fever.

"Are you not tired, Petite Cousine," he asked. "Will you not rest for a while?"

"No, mon cousin," she said, quietly and falteringly, and she was afraid that he would insist.

It grew brighter. They were nearing the end of the forest and already they could feel the full splash of the glaring sun. Petite Cousine looked at the open country nearby. Among the tree trunks the golden light of day showed in slanting patterns. Spatters of strong sunbeams flashed fiercely in front. Petite Cousine began to hurry and Mr. Vincent became aware that she would like to take her hand out of his. At the edge of the wood she stood still, breathed heavily and seemed filled with unusual anxiety. She blushed deeply.

There, in the gorgeous fire of the summer day, lay the wide landscape of Zeven-Born, the three domed hills crowned with dark fir trees, the seven pools like seven eyes of a gigantic monster head, the yellow sandy patches and the dirt roads, the rows of poplars and the variety of bushes.

"That is Zeven-Born," Mr. Vincent resumed. "This, my child, is the true face of Brabant. Do you notice the fine colour nuances, those hundreds of greens and yet *one* green, modulating lithely in a thousand silky shimmerings? Here, Petite Cousine, I have so often watched the battles of Whitebeard-Winter and the golden-locked Lord of Summer! . . . Sit on this soft ledge of the road and quiet the frightened fluttering of your large eyes. Are you afraid? Let me tell you of Zeven-Born."

They both sat down, and the grass was tepid. At a little distance a grasshopper chirped excitedly.

"See how the splendid Lord of Summer now rules the land! You feel the peace of his victory, and in his richness he grows over-lavish. But soon, within a few weeks, the heralds of Whitebeard-Winter will arrive. They will blow their brass trumpets, and the sound will roar across the fields and villages like a storm. Frightened, the swallows will gather over the seven pools, chirping and turning and tossing until, in the wild storm-winds, they will change into a cloud of moving pinpoints.

"'Hi,' shouts the Lord of Summer, 'it avails thee not to blow thy trumpets, for it will all be in vain. Thy noise can only frighten the birds . . .' And he sees the cloud of swallows move toward the south and merely shrugs his shoulders. But the pools of Zeven-Born grow dark. He himself, stunned by the hellish trumpet blowing, feels how his eyes grow clouded and each night he goes to rest at an

earlier hour. Then the animals, the plants and the waters complain ; a great sigh is heaved by the earth itself. The Lord of Summer says, ' Fear not should I sleep a little longer for I shall hang the light across the tree tops . . .' And he does hang the golden light above the trees, that turn into palaces of the noblest metal, and shine.

" ' Zu . . . e . . . u . . . e . . . ue . . .' the trumpets blow ; they roam across the forests, shaking the treetops and biting into the foliage with much noise. Space is filled with dying leaves, the storm swishes golden boughs athwart the skies. And then, Petite Cousine, the rain mèn come. They spread their wet sleeves all over the heavens and empty their vats. The Lord of Summer is drunk with conceit. The grapes from his vineyards he presses out into his mouth, and he winks. ' Never mind . . .' he says lazily, ' it's bombast, all of it . . . it's idle . . . idle . . .' But far away you can already hear the jingling of Whitebeard-Winter's harness. In carriages of the most beautiful purple the bewitched Lord of Summer spreads out his illusions and dozes while, on a wagon made of snow, the mighty enemy makes his entry. He wins with ease, and next morning there is a crust of ice upon the seven pools of Zeven-Born."

In that moment Mr. Vincent truly thought that he had witnessed all this, and it was not difficult for Petite Cousine to believe him. She looked out across the summery land.

" For months he rules like this, Petite Cousine," Mr. Vincent resumed, " till at a certain moment the disillusioned Lord of Summer comes to his senses. Now the struggle is cruel, for regrets sharpen the fury of the Summer Lord and fear doubles the prowess of Whitebeard-Winter. In March, by way of declaration of war, the Lord of Summer hangs out the silver flags of Spring and the stuffy mantle of snow below which the earth is choking, melts away. ' That shall not be ! ' Whitebeard shouts ; he packs the cold clouds tighter together and rattling hailstorms come slanting down to earth. Once more the horrified heralds blow upon their trumpets ; they storm the land again and shatter the meekly waiting verdure. Whatever they do, Summer, with quiet force, warms their breath. Buds swell upon the tree limbs and a curious movement stirs the water of the creeks.

" ' Damnation ! ' the Winter swears exhaustedly, ' you are a coward, youngster ! You shoot from afar. Hurrah ! We shall not die without revenge.' He exerts himself tremendously, jumps across the fields, his chilly harness rattling, and from his hands, in widest sweep, burst forth the terrifying hurricanes. The light of heaven is dimmed ; it seems as if the Winter will after all be victorious. A relentless hailstorm clatters upon his back . . . But, zoom . . . a golden sword tears through the tightly packed clouds and plants its hot fire in the land. A long-drawn wail sounds from the wet

PELMANISM

Brings Out Your Latent Talents

YOU must have often asked yourself why you don't get what you want out of life. The answer is that your mind is a battle-ground where confidence and inferiority complex strive for control. When confidence has the upper hand things go well for you. In business, in social life, your confidence brings success.

Is your enemy here ? Amongst the hindrances and troubles swept away for ever by Pelmanism are—

Indecision	Diffidence
Depression	Procrastination
Forgetfulness	Mind-Wandering
Weakness of Will	Inferiority Feelings

When you have cleared your mind of its difficulties and weaknesses, Pelmanism will tune your mind, sharpen and strengthen it and develop many of these stirring qualities :—

—Initiative	—Ambition
—Optimism	—Personality
—Concentration	—Self-Confidence
—Strength of Will	—Reliable Memory

All qualities of the utmost value in every walk of life.

Pelmanism is an education not from outside, but from within you. It makes all other education fruitful because it shows you how to use it. Unlike any other form of training, Pelmanism helps you to use all your power, your knowledge and your strength of mind and character, while others can use only a fraction of the dormant ability that they were born with.

Half Fees for serving and ex-service members of His Majesty's Forces (Apply for Services Enrolment Form)

The Pelman Course is fully explained in *"The Science of Success"* The Course is simple and interesting and takes up very little time. You can enrol on the most convenient terms. The book will be sent, gratis and post free, on application to :

PELMAN INSTITUTE

(Established over 50 years)

166, Norfolk Mansions, Wigmore Street, London, W.1

Callers welcomed

Convenient, palatable, effective . . .

'Milk of Magnesia'* Tablets, by effectively correcting acidity, give prompt relief from indigestion. They are pleasantly mint-flavoured; convenient to take whenever the need arises.

'MILK OF MAGNESIA' *TABLETS*

(Regd.)

* *'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia.*

horizon and on wheels of slowly dying thunder the broken carriage of Winter runs to the smithy of the North where eight months will be needed for its repair. Smilingly the mighty Lord of Summer sits on his throne of Light, and sweet virgins stretch out against the bright, clear skies the fluttering azure flag of peace, in token of his conquest. Ha! now the trees grow green and the primroses peal their bells. Now young people jubilate and their limbs are intertwined in love's sweet gestures."

He was silent a moment and then he whispered slowly, "It happens there, around the pools of Zeven-Born. The frogs will tell you of it, and as sure as I speak to you, my child, as certain have I seen it and watched it with my own eyes . . ."

Petite Cousine did not answer. She had trembled and her nostrils quivered slightly. Then she closed her lovely lashes halfway, fell back and her head rested against Mr. Vincent's cheek. Tenderly his arm surrounded her and knowing no more, and thinking no longer, he bent over her and kissed Petite Cousine on her mouth.

"Oh, heavens," he whispered in her hair. "Petite Cousine . . ."

And Petite Cousine, against his mouth and with both her hands upon his chest, said, "You are very good . . . you are a poet . . . Next to you I am so very small . . ."

"Petite Cousine! Petite Cousine! . . ."

He caressed her, became strangely excited, and trembled.

The eyes of Petite Cousine shivered with green rays of fire. It seemed to Mr. Vincent that she rose far above the earth and lived in regions of sublimity. She was in ecstasy. She said, "Now to flee from here. Now to run across the fields, to foreign lands, and to go on . . . go on . . . only to live and to go on . . ."

He hardly recognized her voice. He trembled, did not know where to hold the porcelain bowl of chance. To gain time he clung to her words and chanted after her rapturously, "To go on . . . oh, to go on, Petite Cousine . . . Do you know the wonderful intoxication of those trips through the unknown? . . . To glance into the suns of the Future, hand in hand, on the rhythm of our united hearts and driven by the fever of our blood, Petite Cousine . . . To go, go, without end, away from all men and their miserable eloquence . . ."

He felt her breath and the fragrance of tuberoses bewitched his senses. He felt her soft little hand. He felt the mad desire of her flaming lips . . .

"Ah . . ." stammered Petite Cousine. "I love you so . . ."

And he also felt that a scintillating porcelain bowl (what could it be, what could it be? . . .) tired of offering its contents, dissolved its wine-moist edges into mist . . .

They descended into the valley, found the orange groom and the light tilbury and returned home. Uncle Paul, in a thousand

'To Asswage Raging Pains'

¶ "*Take Aloes, Hermodactils and Scammony, of each half a dram; reduce them to subtil powder and make Pills thereof with Juice of Roses*" runs an old seventeenth-century prescription "*to asswage the raging pains of gout and sciatica*".

¶ Nowadays all nerve pains can be 'asswaged' safely and effectively with 'Cogene'.

¶ 'Cogene' is a scientific combination of four separate drugs, three of them pain relievers and the fourth a stimulant. Medical science now knows that a small quantity of a powerful drug will do the work of a large dose if it is backed by the right combination of other drugs in the right proportions. 'Cogene' contains only a minute amount of each drug but its formula is so effective that it reaches even the most harassing nerve pain.

¶ *But* remember that 'Cogene' cannot remove the *cause* of the pain: only a doctor or a dentist can do that. Supplies are limited, but your chemist will see you get *your* share. Price 1/1½d. a tube.

COGENE

Regd. Trade Mark — Brand Tablets

A 'GENATOSAN' PRODUCT

50 Years of Pipe Contentment

ROYAL SEAL

2/8 PER OZ

A QUALITY TOBACCO FOR 50 YEARS

Join the Well-Paid Ranks of the I.C.S.- TRAINED MEN

What about your future? What of the new world and the marvellous opportunities it offers—to those who have had specialized training? One thing is certain—there will never be any worth-while place for the untrained.

Ambitious men everywhere have succeeded through I.C.S. Home Study Courses. So also can you. We offer you the benefit of our 56 years' matchless experience as the creative pioneers of technical instruction by post.

Here are some of the subjects in which we offer thoroughly sound instruction :

ACCOUNTANCY
ADVERTISING
AERONAUTICAL ENG.
AIRCRAFT ENG. LIC.
ARCHITECTURE
AUDITING
BOOK-KEEPING
BUILDING
BUSINESS TRAINING
BUSINESS M'G'MENT
CHEMICAL ENG.
CHEMISTRY, I. & O.
COMMERCIAL ART
CIVIL ENG.
DIESEL ENG.
DRAUGHTSMANSHIP (state which branch)
DRAWING OFFICE PRACTICE
ELECTRICAL ENG.
INDUSTR'L M'G'MENT
ILLUMINATION ENG.
INTERNAL COMB. ENG.
JOURNALISM
MACHINE DESIGN
MECHANICAL ENG.
MINING
MOTOR ENG.
MOTOR MECHANIC
PLASTICS
PLUMBING
QUANTITY SURVEYING
RADIO ENG.
RADIO SERVICING
SALES MANAGEMENT
SANITARY ENG.
SHORT-STORY WRTG.
SURVEYING (state which branch)
TELEGRAPH ENG.
WOODWORKING
WORKS ENG.

Exams : Tech., Prof., Matric,

Write to the I.C.S. Advisory Dept. stating your requirements. Our advice is free and places you under no obligation.

..... *You may use this coupon* .....

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Dept. 131, International Buildings, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

Please send me particulars of your Courses in

.....

Name..... Age.....

Address.....

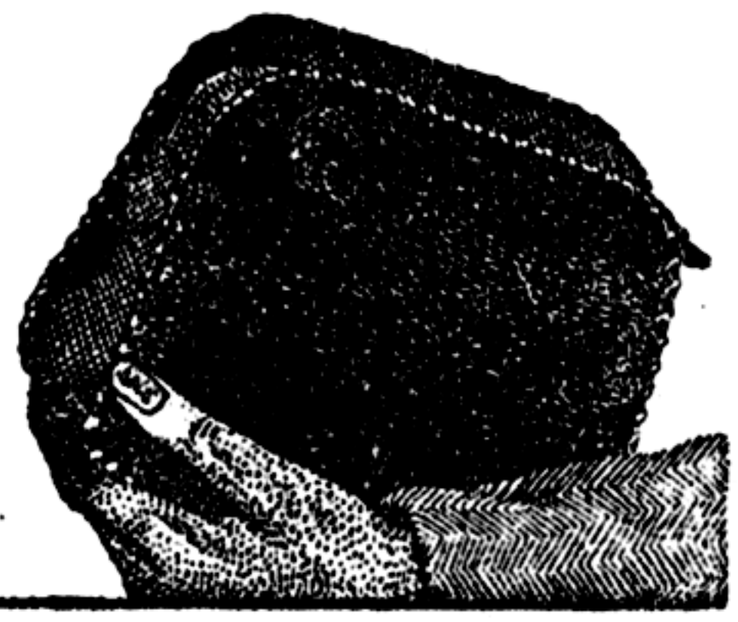
.....

ICS

KEEP A FIRM HOLD OF YOUR shopping drill

DESIRE!

"My dear—the very thing!"



DEBATE!

"But is it worth all that?"

DEFER!

"No! I think I'll wait till there's more choice".

What's the point in keeping down our spending? Well, for one thing, Savings will mean more and better spending later on. And—more important—the less we buy at home, the more we can sell abroad to help the rebuilding of our vital export trade.

Today's best value is SAVINGS

Issued by the National Savings Committee

fears, stood awaiting them and wondered whether the stage coach would meantime have left.

Petite Cousine departed as she had come. She gave her hand to Mr. Vincent and with her rosy thumb she lightly flicked his nose. Blithely she laughed in his face, and her parting words were, " God weren't we stupid . . ."

And so she left Mr. Vincent behind in his garden, looking down upon his age ; and the good man, having driven from his thoughts the picture of a certain Señor Alvarez, began to think of a poor little girl he had seen somewhere, her nose plastered against a show-window, and to whom he wished to present a wonderful doll.

Translated by JOSEPH W. F. STOPPELMAN

* * *

ANSWERS to OWL SONG on page 32

1. " *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,*" *by Thomas Gray.*
2. " *'Tis the voice of the Lobster,*" *by Lewis Carroll, (Alice's Adventures in Wonderland).*
3. " *To Minerva,*" *by Thomas Hood.*
4. " *The Eve of St. Agnes,*" *by John Keats.*
5. " *Christabel,*" *by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*
6. " *Macbeth,*" *by William Shakespeare.*
7. " *The Owl,*" *by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*
8. " *The Jumblies,*" *by Edward Lear.*
9. " *Letter to Maria Gisborne,*" *by Percy Bysshe Shelley.*
10. " *Don Juan,*" *by Lord Byron.*

* * *

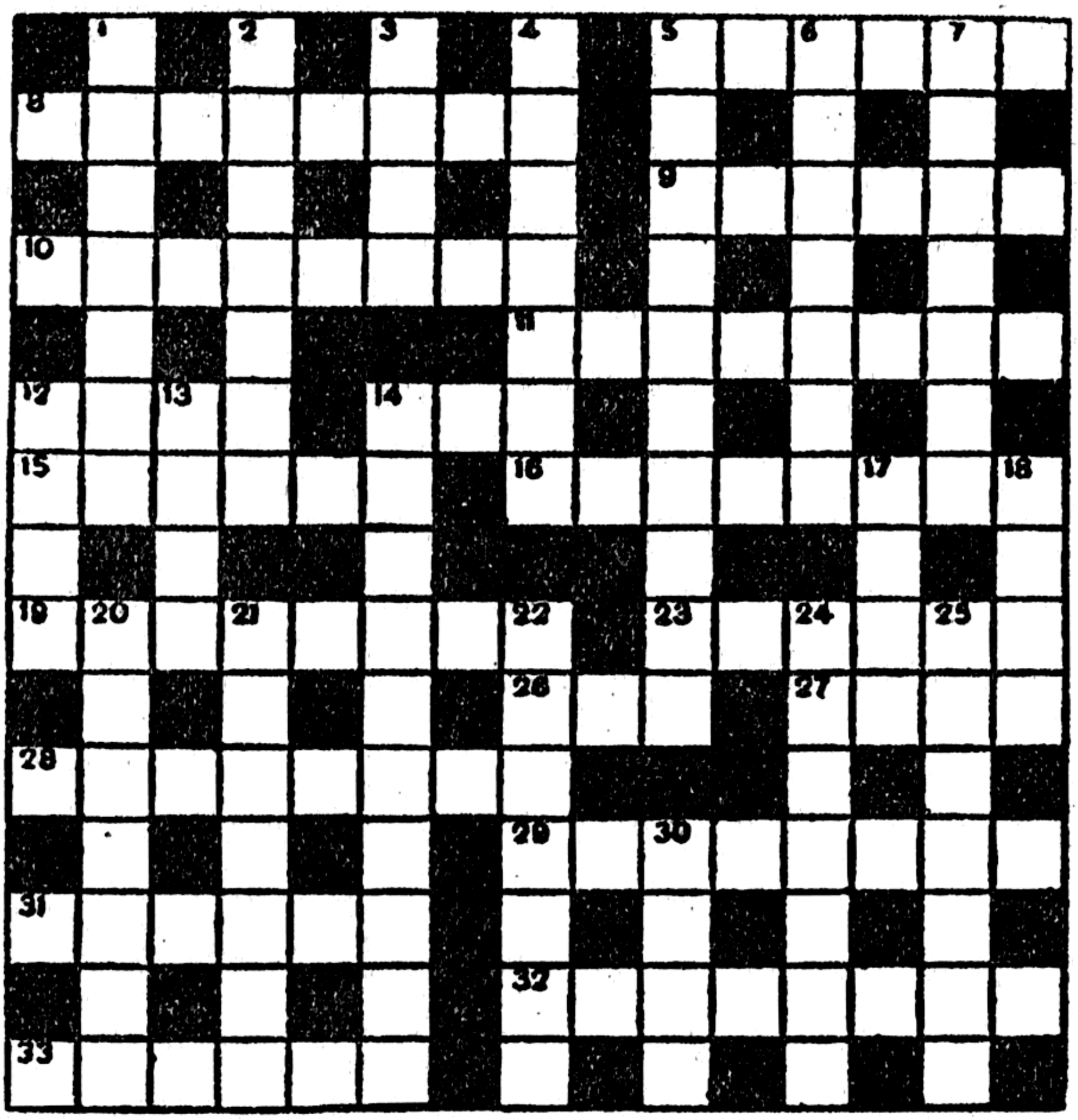
SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 96

Across : 5, Facade. 8, Conquest. 9, Thebes. 10, Romantic. 11, Keepsake. 12, Able. 14, Ace. 15, Louder. 16, Deleting. 19, Magazine. 23, Nudist. 26, Lad. 27, Isle. 28, Carefree. 29, Vegetate. 31, Thrift. 32, Tapering. 33, Unfair.

Down : 1, Colombo. 2, Squared. 3, Vent. 4, Stocked. 5, Fatherland. 6, Cresset. 7, Doeskin. 12, Alum. 13, Lung. 14, Arbitrator. 17, Iris. 18, Gate. 20, Aga Khan. 21, America. 22, Elevate. 24, Distort. 25, Slating. 30, Gape.

ARGOSY CROSS WORD

Solution on page 95



CLUES

Across

5 The front includes no gentleman (6)

8 Many on the hunt bring favourable close of hostilities (8).

9 This ancient city was nearly the best (6).

10 Classical pain has glamour (8).

11 Retain an Eastern drink as memento (8).

12 Cur with this is not past remedy (4).

14 May be a spade, of course (3).

15 Sounding more, undoubtedly (6).

16 A destructive process partly let in (8).

19 The editor always hopes the contents of this will go off well, of course (8).

23 No friend to the tailor (6).

26 Is seen on the stage in a din (3).

27 Of this land part is English part the French (4).

28 Light of heart (8).

29 Unnecessary advice to a cabbage (even twice beheaded!) (8).

31 To be seen on a new threepenny bit (6).

32 Binding material combine is coming to the point (8).

33 Not just as rogues might like things (6).

Down

1 Behold a doctor in this Eastern port (7).

2 This up is settled, and beheaded is like a colour (7).

3 Opening that might lead to a blow abroad (4).

4 Supplied from dockets (7).

5 Many a child has gone to Croydon to see his this on his this (10).

6 Mostly a plant, but is lighter (7).

7 Kind of leather (7).

12 An extract from mineral umber (4).

13 A polluter of the air, to the owner's advantage (4).

14 He might be a sound judge, but his end sounds untrustworthy (10).

17 Flag everyone displays (4).

18 This is often barred in the country (4).

20 A well-known personage, interested in many races (two words—3, 4).

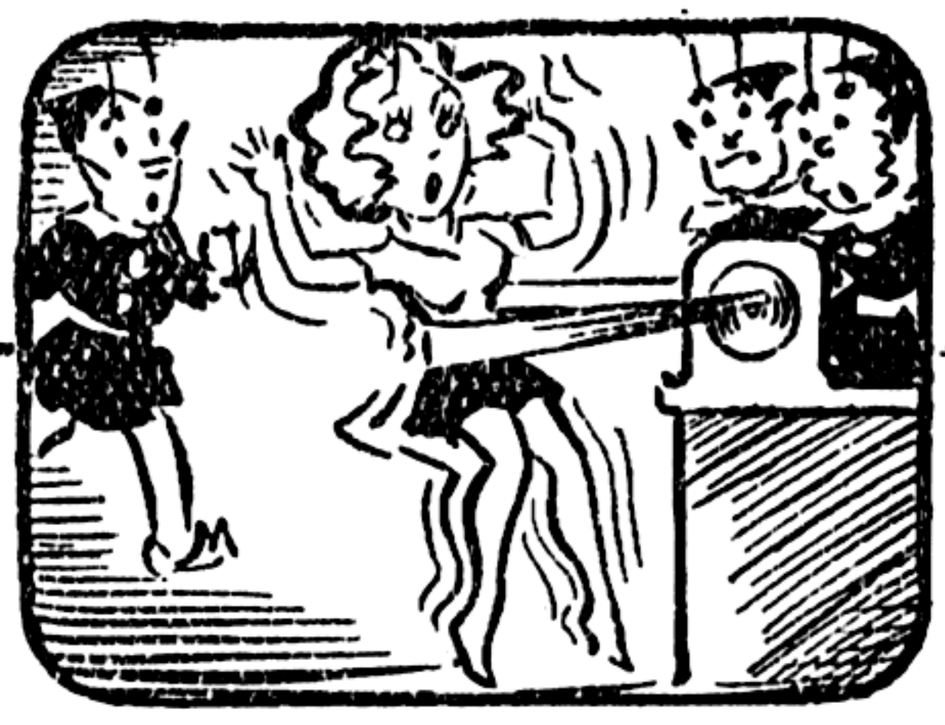
21 There's mixed crime in this land (7).

22 To do this would be a put up job in a way (7).

24 Hardly to keep in good shape (7).

25 Adverse criticism in building circles? (7).

30 Yawn (4).



THE "FLUXITE QUINS" AT WORK

Cried OO "I'll give FLUXITE its due
This motor is now good as new,
But I'm sure all this vigour
Is too much for my figure
Switch off! Oh hurry! Please do!"

See that **FLUXITE** is always by you—in the house—garage—workshop—wherever speedy soldering is needed. Used for over 30 years in Government works and by leading engineers and manufacturers. Of all Ironmongers—in tins, **10d., 1/6,** and **3/-.** Ask to see the **FLUXITE Pocket Blow-Lamp,** price **2/6**

TO CYCLISTS: Your wheels will NOT keep round and true unless the spokes are tied with fine wire at the crossings and SOLDERED. This makes a much stronger wheel. It's simple — with FLUXITE — but IMPORTANT.

The **"FLUXITE GUN"** puts **FLUXITE** where you want it by a simple pressure. Price **1/6**, or filled **2/6**.

ALL MECHANICS *WILL* HAVE

FLUXITE

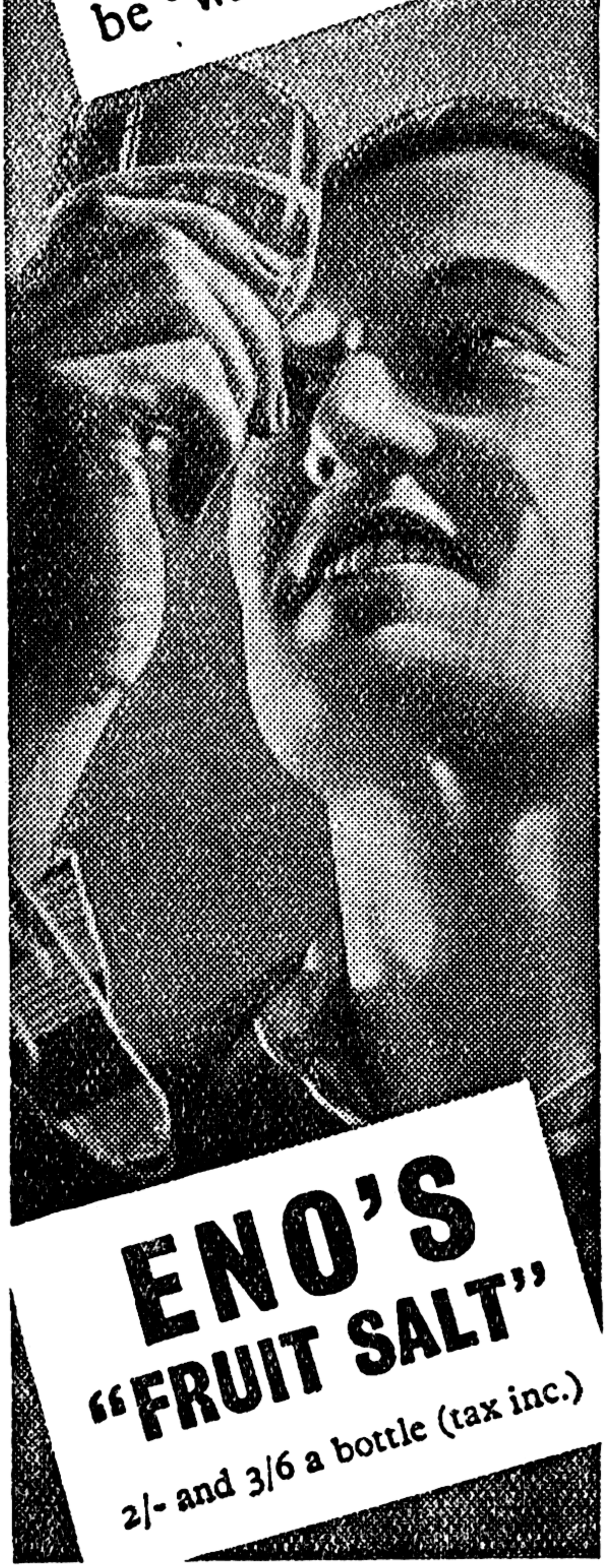
IT SIMPLIFIES *ALL* SOLDERING

Write for Book on the ART OF "SOFT" SOLDERING and for Leaflets on CASE-HARDENING STEEL and TEMPERING TOOLS with FLUXITE. Price 1d. each

FLUXITE LTD.

(Dept. A.M.), Bermondsey Street S.E.1,

Early to bed, early to rise, and Eno each day—is *my* way to be 'wise'.



ENO'S "FRUIT SALT"

2/- and 3/6 a bottle (tax inc.)

A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME!

BLACKBIRD

From where I sing, so high, so high,
Little escapes my beady eye!
I see folk gardening, being fed,
And getting up, or going to bed!
Through bathroom windows, far beneath,
I even watch them clean their teeth,
And I will stake my sable coat,
My yellow bill and silver note,
That where teeth have the whitest gloss,
You'll find a tube of Kolynos!

CONFIDENTIALLY it's KOLYNOS
FOR WHITER, BRIGHTER TEETH
REGD.

Have a different holiday!

HERE at the centre of Britain and in the heart of Yorkshire's lovely moors and dales, Harrogate offers you all the attractions of a countryside crowded with places of great scenic and historic interest and all the delights of a modern holiday town.

THE IDEAL CENTRE

It offers you a wide range of high class entertainments and every facility is provided for outdoor sports and games—golf, tennis, squash, bowls, riding, fishing and shooting.
There is excellent accommodation in Harrogate's famous hotels and boarding houses.

Particulars from A. E. Baxter,
Information Bureau, Harrogate.

HARROGATE
THE NATURAL PLAYGROUND